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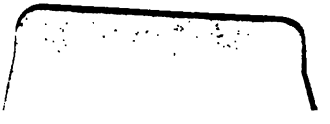

American Religious Leaders

WILBUR FISK

BY

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WILBUR FISK.

CHAPTER I.

THE METHODIST INVASION OF NEW ENGLAND.

Up to the year 1789 no minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church had made more than a brief visit to New England; but at the New York Conference convened that year on May 28th in New York, Bishop Asbury gratified a well-known longing of Jesse Lee by sending him to New England as a missionary. Mr. Lee had a colleague, but he was left to undertake the mission alone. He believed that the Methodist Episcopal Church had a great part to play, by the overthrow of formal and unspiritual religion wherever it had become rooted in pastors and churches, by assailing and putting to shame Calvinistic errors which were alike dishonorable to God and ruinous to souls, and by gathering churches after the model of the Wesleyan societies, with an Arminian theology and a regenerate and sanctified membership.

After three months of untiring labor, Mr. Lee organized a class of three members, and after three months more a class of two members. On the 26th

of September, 1789, the first Methodist Episcopal Church in New England was organized at Stratfield, Conn. In February, 1790, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith were sent to assist Mr. Lee. Leaving Mr. Brush in charge of the circuit he had formed, Mr. Lee and Mr. Smith laid out the New Haven circuit, extending as far as Hartford. Two churches were built and two hundred members were gathered into the societies within the first sixteen months of Mr. Lee's mission. This small beginning did not dishearten the souls of the wide-wandering itinerants themselves, nor mislead the keen-sighted Asbury as to the importance of the new work. Within the first decade of New England Methodism, three and a half presiding elders' districts were established, thirty circuits formed, forty-one ministers were on their rounds, while ninety-five preachers in all had taken part in this Methodistic invasion of the Eastern States. Converts had been won at the rate of five hundred a year. At the end of the second decade, the total membership of the Methodist churches in New England was 14,488, and at the end of the third decade, the year after Wilbur Fisk joined the New England Conference, the total was 21,365.

How shall we account for such remarkable success? First, the men who won it were remarkable men. Yet should we print the names of the ninety-five itinerants who were in New England within the first decade, very few of them would be known to the American public. Nay, many of

these names would have an unfamiliar sound to New England Methodists. The reason is not far to seek. Most of them were not New Englanders by birth, lived but a few years in the Eastern States, and returned to their earlier residences to spend the strength of their manhood far away from New England. It is no marvel if their names are largely forgotten by the present generation. Were the names of a hundred average lawyers, clergymen, or physicians, their contemporaries in the Eastern States, printed here, how few of them would call up any distinct image or recollection to the American public! The itinerants' success in New England is itself the resistless evidence of their remarkable qualities. Dr. Stevens has sketched them in a volume called "Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States."

Bishop Asbury's part in the movement was that of official superintendence. His unrivaled acquaintance with the preachers who were to be dispatched on this mission enabled him to select men who would be sure to win success. First, they were men of good personal appearance, whose dress was unique, whose manners were familiar and accessible, whose outdoor habits of life made them at ease with all sorts and conditions of men. The fact that, like Henry Clay, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln, they were not college-bred but self-made men made it easier for them to comprehend and take advantage of currents of

feeling amongst the "plain people," whom only such men can fully comprehend and readily influence.

Then they were men of extraordinary spirituality and devotion, whose every-day life was a denial of the world, the flesh, and the devil. To forsake home and kindred and all worldly ambitions and selfish modes of living, to be always in the saddle, always on the march like soldiers, to go amongst strangers on religious errands which would bring them into collision with the settled convictions of all New England, to be counted and to be the offscouring of all things for Christ's sake, was a spiritual discipline compared with which those of Jesuit and Trappist were slight and ineffectual. And they did all that on an allowance of sixty dollars a year, subject to every appeal which the greater needs of some men always make to generous minds. And all this was done, not in a spirit of submission, but of exultation that they were permitted to win souls from sin to holiness at any possible expense of effort and self-sacrifice. Nobody could accuse them of worldly and secular motives in their ministry of love.

Then the intensity of their convictions gave a dread or happy accent of reality to all their sayings and doings. They believed in every article of a Christian's faith with all their minds and hearts. Every motive that has its roots in the awfulness of sin, the brevity, swiftness, and solemnity of life, the danger of delay in religious duties, the possi-

bility of saving souls from death who might otherwise persist in impenitence and incur eternal perdition, told with unabated energy upon their minds. What cheered and comforted them was that they had a salvation to offer which was adequate for the relief of every lost soul around them. Not one of them was there who was not ready to testify that he had himself received that regenerate life which he commended to others, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, and that entire sanctification was a conscious possession. In spite of all the hardships of their lives and the obstacles their mission encountered, they were the only ministers in New England who seemed fully to have the apostolic spirit, the apostolic faith, and the true fruits of apostleship.

At first they would gladly have steered clear of controverted points, insisting merely on the necessity of regeneration, of a holy life, and of saving other men from sin and death. But their adversaries soon taught them better by maintaining that the only reason for their reticence was the badness of their principles. Hence they set before the people who were gathered in their assemblies the dogmas of universal redemption; that the call of the gospel comes to all men alike; that all may be saved on the same terms; that none are eternal reprobates by God's decree, but only by their own avoidable misdoing; that all are so equally free agents that any one may sin against any light forever, when obedience to that same light would

have saved him; and that even the holiest saint can stand fast in the faith and hope of the gospel only by incessant watchfulness.

Then ensued a persistent effort to spread these doctrines all over New England. Since the invading party had no newspapers, no schools or colleges of their own, they could not assail their foes in newspapers, in the teacher's seat, or the professor's chair. They were wandering evangelists who made use of such chances as came into their hands for doing their work. In private conversation, in class-meetings, in prayer-meetings, in love-feasts, in quarterly meetings, in the home pulpit, at camp-meetings, and conferences, an incessant war was kept up against Calvinism. One minister was baptizing a child in church; he lifted up the sweet face, smiling under the baptismal drops, for the congregation to see, asking, "Does this look like an eternal reprobate?" When the presiding elder came on his rounds, one of his sermons was pretty sure to aim at developing the higher Christian character, and the other to arraign the mysterious and awful dogmas of the popular creed. At camp-meetings one or two sermons were devoted to a systematic exposure of Calvinistic errors. This polemic against Augustinianism was rarely metaphysical, but kept to the plain, obvious declarations of Scripture. The preachers had studied with care all the arguments by which their opponents undertook to vindicate the consistency of their own views with Scripture, and could and did

expose them with great precision. Jesse Lee used to wind up some of his detailed discussions of these controverted texts and points with "God's oath that he was no Calvinist." "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live." (Ezek. xviii. 32.)

When Whitefield met Wesley's first missionaries, Boardman and Pilmoor, in Philadelphia, he said to them, "If you were only Calvinists you would carry the country before you." Were Whitefield to return to earth, what would be his surprise to find that the Wesleyan itinerants had carried the country with them as he never did or could! When Whitefield came to New England, he found the Congregational churches secularized by the effects of the law, enacted in 1631 and repealed in 1688, that only church members should vote or hold office. Under that law the rule was to admit everybody into the church whose life stopped short of public scandal. Real Christians soon became a small minority in most of the churches, and lost the general direction of the church. A secularized church membership soon desired pastors after its own heart, and had them, too. The natural consequence of creating a church membership without spirituality was, that the doctrine was stoutly maintained that piety was not necessary in the pastors of the church. Wickedness in the pews did not care to put holiness into the pulpit.

This condition of things resulted naturally in the adoption of the Halfway Covenant. The intent of this measure was to treat common morality in parents who had been baptized in infancy or afterwards, but were not members of the church, as though they were Christians, and to give their children baptism on condition of a pledge to train them in the moralities rather than the spiritualities of the gospel. Thus baptism opened the way to office and honor. So rapid was this ill-omened change that on his first visit to New England, Whitefield found himself compelled stoutly to demand the signs of regenerate life in his own converts. He also denounced the practice of admitting unspiritual persons to the sacraments or to the ministry. Yet so general was this habit that more than twenty ministers near Boston, who were converted through Whitefield's faithful rebukes, had become ministers without conversion. It was devotion to the Halfway Covenant which silenced Edwards, and embittered Whitefield's later visit to New England. Revivals ceased. Many congregations of unbelievers had unconverted pastors. The result did not fail to justify the wisdom of the divine saying, "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." Yet not a few "kept their garments unspotted from the world."

For fifty years there had been no great religious revival. The Revolutionary War had largely demoralized public morals, and popularized the

French and the Tom Paine styles of infidelity. There was no sign of a revival in the churches.

But suddenly, two by two, Asbury's itinerant evangelists begin to traverse New England. They preach in town-houses, churches, school-houses, in orchards, on commons. They act as their own sextons, ring the bell, light the candles and fires. They preach three or four times on Sundays, and once or twice every week-day. Here and there they find little knots of prayerful and expectant souls, whom they form into classes and speedily gather into churches. They accept no halfway covenants, tolerate no unconverted members in their societies: they build up churches rich in every Christian virtue. For some reason the movement does not, any more than St. Paul's revival, lay hold of "many noble" or "many wise;" yet, like his, it made many noble and many wise.

They made great use of the Wesleyan hymns in the effort to diffuse their theology amongst the masses. Nearly all of them were good singers, and knew how to catch and hold the public ear by their songs. These hymns themselves embody the system of thought, the burning emotions of one of the greatest religious revivals the world has ever seen. They were sung at public worship, in prayer-meetings, class-meetings, love-feasts, camp-meetings, and in the home churches, all over New England. It is ten times as easy to learn and repeat a hymn as a sermon. Then the new hymns were set to music, which lingered on the ear in

such a way as to tempt their frequent repetition. There is no telling how far a single hymn may fly; and when a whole mass of such winged messengers are at the command and on the tongues' end of multitudes, they become a very potent evangelizing force, not only in the transformation of individual character, but also of public opinion. Charles Wesley's hymns have had quite as much to do with the popularizing of the Wesleyan doctrines as John Wesley's sermons. One has no difficulty in seeing how such doctrines, proclaimed in such a spirit and by such men, should have made a great impression on the public mind in New England. Puritanism had lost out of its doctrine, out of its pulpit, out of its religious life, that joyous element which Christianity always had on the lips of Jesus and of Paul, since it is good tidings of great joy for all people, and especially to men of goodwill. This spontaneous joy in God and his salvation, the joy of forgiveness and the raptures of holiness of heart, were instantly felt to be the restoration of something that was a real part of the gospel. Hence, in spite of all the social disadvantages under which Methodism was propagated in New England, it carried into the public feeling and consciousness the clear perception that to be, and to be sure that one was, a child of God was such a change in spiritual condition as ought to give birth to a deep and permanent religious exhilaration. The early New England Methodists carried this atmosphere of

religious exhilaration with them everywhere. This made their private intercourse serenely happy, and their public worship electric with spiritual life and love.

Before this movement had been fifteen years in New England, it had reached the Fisk household. The mother of Wilbur, descendant of a Puritan minister though she was, had somewhere listened to the preaching of the Methodist preachers, and she gave ear to their word as the very word of God. She invited the itinerants to her house, joined a religious class, became a member of the church, and presently had the happiness of seeing all her family members of the same body. She effected this change in the religious relations of the household because the doctrines and life of the new church seemed to her more scriptural, more reasonable, and more helpful than those of the church to which her family had been devoted for eight generations.

In this way Methodism gave substance and shape to Wilbur Fisk's first serious religious development. It is wonderful to reflect how largely this stripling was destined to give it a new and higher direction. If there was any one point where the leadership of Asbury, Lee, and men of their stamp was at fault, it was in their failure to appreciate the immense and indispensable importance of having educational institutions under their patronage and control. Had Wesley led the American Methodist societies, instead of Asbury and Coke, he would

never have submitted to defeat at Cokesbury on the collegiate education question. The very fact that they had lost $50,000 by the successive conflagrations which visited the institution (nearly half as much as Wesleyan University was worth in Wilbur Fisk's day) is a striking evidence of the depth and sincerity of the interest of early Methodists in educational work. One of the questions most often put to Lee and his associates was, whether they were college-bred men. Nor did Lee quite realize how insufficient was his usual answer, "that he made no great pretension, yet thought he knew enough to get through the country."

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUTH OF WILBUR FISK.

WILBUR FISK was born at Brattleborough, Vt., August 31, 1792. He was the son of Isaiah and Hannah Fisk, and was descended on both sides from ancestors who were amongst the early settlers of Massachusetts.

The family life was of the sort so felicitously described by Dr. Bushnell in "The Age of Homespun." It was a life in which the farm and the shop and the church had far more to do with the training of the people than school and college. So true was this of young Fisk that until his sixteenth year he had not been to school more than two or three years. Then he attended a sort of academy at Peacham. Not much is known about the school, but the ambitious Fisk carried his studies so far there that he was admitted on examination to the sophomore class in the University of Vermont, in July, 1812. He continued a student at Burlington until the suspension of the work of the university in consequence of the buildings being turned over to General Macomb for the use of the American army. We know that the course of study was not very different from that at Union

and Dartmouth in those days. The course of study may still be seen, and Fisk's certificate of admission shows the president's name. In Fisk's letters to his friends, the names of a few student friends are given; and a few compositions, orations, and a poem, called "Vermont," may be seen by the curious. But the letters do not show what his associates and superiors thought of him, or what kind of impression his educators made upon him. Of them there is neither criticism nor laudation.

In the spring term of 1814, Mr. Fisk was admitted to the junior class of Brown University. Of this institution the Rev. Asa Messer, D. D., was then the president, with four professors and two tutors to assist him in the work of instruction. There Mr. Fisk would naturally have to do only with the president and professors. Here, again, we hear no criticism on his new instructors or the course of study, no comparisons with anything at the University of Vermont, no hint of the personal impressions made upon him by any instructor. Nor is there any trace of any impression he made on his instructors. One of his classmates ranks him as their best scholar. One might excel him in the mathematics, another in the classics, but none in *belles lettres* or in general scholarship. He won a high reputation for skill in debate at the preparatory school and in both universities. He won friends everywhere, whose friendship was of the warmest and most enduring character. The appointments assigned Fisk for

public exercises show a high opinion of his abilities. In both universities he was chosen by the under-graduates to speak before the college of the death of one of their number. He read much of the best English literature while an under-graduate. He took special pains with his elocution, and in Providence he managed to hear the leaders of the Rhode Island bar whenever possible. Though a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was not known in school or college as a religious man. He was graduated in the summer of 1815.

Soon after his return home, he began to study law in the office of Isaac Fletcher, of Lyndon. But he had not been long about it before he saw that the legal profession would be fatal to his religious character. Hence he resolved to study for the ministry, and wrote to his classmate, the Rev. George Taft, upon the whole subject. Meanwhile he had become private tutor in a family near Baltimore. But his residence there was suddenly terminated by such severe hemorrhages of the lungs that his physician told him he must not hope to use his voice much in his professional labors. He had more than once suffered in this way at Burlington and at Providence. On reaching home in June, 1817, he found Lyndon the scene of a profound religious revival. Here his earlier religious convictions resumed their sway so fully that, before he had any chance to confess his backslidings, he had recovered the favor of God, and the witness of the Spirit to his sonship. Instantly he resolved to

become a minister. His classmate, David Gould, corresponded with him on the points in debate between Calvinism and Arminianism, after a distinct avowal of Fisk's purpose to preach Calvinism in case he was convinced of the truth of that system. These letters would show us whether Fisk's repudiation of Calvinism, that was the motive which kept him out of the Congregational Church, also barred him out of the service of the Episcopal Church. Some things would have led him with gentle force to that church. The lady to whom he was engaged was an Episcopalian. His classmate, Taft, set before him such motives as he thought would influence Fisk's mind. Another classmate repeated Taft's arguments, and denounced with rude energy the faults and errors of the Methodist Church. It is probable that the main reason which kept Mr. Fisk from entering the Episcopal ministry was its toleration of Calvinistic dogmas, though he may have been influenced further by his keen sympathy with the intense religious activity of the Methodist Church.

March 14, 1818, Wilbur Fisk was licensed a local preacher at Lyndon, Vt. He joined the New England Conference on probation in June, 1818.

CHAPTER III.

ECCLESIASTICAL AND THEOLOGICAL.

SHOULD Wilbur Fisk revisit the glimpses of the moon to inquire into the condition of the church of his choice in New England, instead of the 21,365 church members then served by 122 ministers reported in 1819, he would now (1888) find 155,413 members served by 1,250 ministers. He would find the territory occupied by the conference he joined partitioned into six annual conferences, the least of which is larger than the body he joined, while the conference with the old name is almost thrice as large as the one he entered. Should he ask after Vermont Methodism, — a very natural question for him, — he would learn that the state now numbers more Methodists than his old conference had in 1819. Should he ask after the present rate of growth, he would hear that more new members had joined the church within the bounds of the old New England Conference last year than it had, all told, the day he joined it. Should he demand — another very natural question for him — what the church is doing in the educational work that was so dear to his heart when on earth, he would be informed that there were eight semina-

ries under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the poorest of which was richer, and better equipped with buildings, teachers, libraries, and scientific apparatus, than Wesleyan Academy ever was in his time, and the richest of them far stronger in all these particulars than Wesleyan University ever was when under his care; that Wesleyan University had in real estate, buildings, and other college property, with its invested funds, $1,270,000; that a new Methodist University had sprung up at Boston, with a property valued at $1,252,580, having, besides the college work, flourishing law, medical, and theological schools, with 120 instructors of all grades and 775 students.

Such is the change which has come to pass in the standing and work of New England Methodism in less than seventy years. It used to be held by all the theological and ecclesiastical critics of Methodism, that the Eastern States would prove inaccessible to Wesleyan ideas, and unsuited to Methodistic methods. On the surface of things, there was much to justify the notion. The itinerant system was in complete antagonism to the pastoral ideals cherished there by all ecclesiastical parties. The Baptist, Congregationalist, Catholic, and Protestant Episcopal churches had many points of mutual jar and conflict; but they had one point of agreement, their common rejection of the itinerant system as unsuited to New England. They probably still cling to their old ideas on this point, though with less confidence since the judgment of

events has gone so strongly against them. If there still are many in the Eastern States who deem the itinerant system a source of strength, they are probably chiefly Methodists. The idea is held by some that the growth of Methodism has been largely due to weariness of Congregationalist forms of church government and life. There may be such a weariness in the ecclesiastical temper of New England; but if this has really operated to any great extent, it has helped the Protestant Episcopal rather than the Methodist Episcopal Church. Methodist ministers become Congregationalists, Baptists, Churchmen, or, like the two Colliers, Unitarians. Rarely do clergymen from other churches seek a place in our conferences on account of our church government. The reason of this is, doubtless, that we have no faith at all in the dogma of apostolical succession, and all its kindred ideas and practices. Hence the ecclesiastical unrest of the New England mind never turns its victims to a church which drew its apostolical succession from John Wesley and Thomas Coke.

But the Protestant Episcopal Church, notwithstanding all the advantages which have accrued to it, from its episcopal form of government, from its more æsthetic and liturgical forms of worship, and from its welcoming with impartial warmth Calvinists and Arminians to its fold, has failed to make anything like such an advance as the younger church has secured. Though organized and at work in New England far earlier than the younger

denomination, she counts here only 61,314 church members, served by 522 clergy; while the Methodist conferences, as we have just seen, number 155,413 church members, served by 1,250 ministers of the gospel. Certain extravagant reasoners affirm that the Methodist body has outstripped her competitors because they have always found some of their most efficient preachers in men who have never seen a college or a theological seminary. Such visionaries quite forget that the more fully educated a man is, the warmer is his welcome in our conferences, while well-educated ministers succeed at a far nobler rate than any of their less instructed predecessors; and, finally, that the Eastern States are the most unlikely places in the world for uneducated ministers to succeed in. The main cause of our success has not been in our peculiar organization, or in our itinerant ministry, or in our imperfectly educated clergy, but is mainly found in the theological doctrines we have proclaimed. While this is no place for any careful and detailed exhibition of all the elements of the Arminian creed, and especially of its points of agreement and of collision with Calvinistic dogmas, a brief sketch will be necessary in order to render Wilbur Fisk's career intelligible.

His mother had somewhere listened to the preaching of the early Methodist preachers in her adopted state, and had been drawn to their doctrines in preference to the Calvinistic ones she had been wont to hear. To her it seemed like the

dawning on her mind of a new and better doctrinal system. She was prompt to invite these new preachers to her home in Lyndon. In the original Methodist class of Lyndon her name found a place, and that class was the root out of which grew, all in good time, the Methodist society of the town. Her home was often the home of the itinerant preacher on his rounds through his circuit, and so it had grown to be the head centre of Methodist influence and activities. It is said expressly that this descendant of a Puritan minister made this change in the religious relations of the family because she thought this system a more rational and more scriptural theology than the Calvinism she had been bred in. Through all the joyful beginnings of his early Christian life, through his long seasons of backsliding at school and college, her prayers had pursued her son as fervently and as unwaveringly as the prayers of St. Monica had gone up, centuries earlier, for her gifted son, Augustine; for she seems to have had an almost prophetic foresight of the future usefulness and greatness of her Wilbur. She once told her son's widow: "All through the period when my son was planning to become a great lawyer, and studying to render himself a great statesman, my fervent petitions went up incessantly that God would make him a herald of the cross, and God heard and answered my prayers." Hence her memory should be sacred to all who honor the work of her son.

But we are confronted by the statement of a brilliant essayist that the Methodist system, from the very nature of the case, cannot be a good one. Matthew Arnold, who always had the courage of his opinions, and whose courage was sometimes stoutest just where his ignorance was greatest, holds the Dissenters of England in profound contempt because in religion they are typical British Philistines; and he regards the Methodist variety as the most discouraging species of the religious Philistines. In "A Word about America" he says: —

"In that universally religious country, the religious denomination which has by much the largest number of adherents is that, I believe, of Methodism, originating in John Wesley, and which we know in this country as having for its standard of doctrine Mr. Wesley's fifty-three sermons and notes on the New Testament. I have a sincere admiration for Wesley, and a sincere esteem for the Wesleyan Methodist body in this country, for I have seen much of it, and for many of its members my esteem is not only sincere but also affectionate. I know how one's religious connections and religious attachments are determined by the circumstances of one's birth and bringing up; and probably, if I had been brought up among the Wesleyans, I should never have left their body. But certainly I should have wished my children to leave it; because to live with one's mind, in regard to a thing of absorbing importance, as Wesleyans believe religion to be, — to live with one's mind, as to a matter of this sort, fixed upon a mind of the third order, such as was Mr. Wesley's, seems to me extremely trying and

injurious for the minds of men in general. And people whose minds, in what is the chief concern of their lives, are thus constantly fixed upon a mind of the third order, are the staple of the population of the United States, in the small towns and country districts above all."

If Mr. Arnold had suffered his "affectionate respect" for his clerical Wesleyan Methodist acquaintances so far to overcome his inborn and inbred contempt for all forms of English dissent as to have asked for the theological manual from which they had learned their systematic theology, he would have had the "Theological Institutes" of Richard Watson put into his hands, of which so competent and impartial a judge as Professor J. W. Alexander, of Princeton College, says: "Turretine is, in theology, *instar omnium;* that is, so far as Blackstone is in law. Making due allowance for the difference of age, Watson, the Methodist, is the only systematizer within my knowledge who approaches the same eminence; of whom I use Addison's words: 'He reasons like Paley and descants like Hall.'"

Not only would he have found this account of Watson fully justified, but he would have learned that Wesley's pet ideas about assurance, the witness of the Spirit, and Christian perfection occupy a very subordinate, though not unimportant, place in the work. Mr. Arnold's idea that Wesleyan boys and girls are brought up on Wesley's sermons and notes on the New Testament, that they repeat them as other boys repeat hymns and catechisms,

and that the more of Wesley a boy's retentive memory enables him to cram, the surer he will be to win the approval of good Methodists, is as absurd as any other grotesque fiction. It may hoax ignorant Churchmen like himself, in England or America; but it will move no intelligent Methodist to return to the Church of England, lest his sons and daughters should find "sweetness and light" impossible achievements. It has been said of the English Church that it possesses Calvinistic articles, an Arminian clergy, and a Romanist liturgy. Yet Mr. Arnold is never tired of repeating that the one infallible panacea for curing all the religious Philistines who are known as Wesleyans, Baptists, Independents, and Congregationalists, (including even Mr. Miall and Mr. Winterbotham) is to go back to the Church of England. If we are to believe him there is for them salvation in no other course; and, indeed, in the sense of Jesus and of Paul, they are plain schismatics as things now stand. Are there any good reasons for supposing, as the Episcopal House of Bishops evidently thinks, that there are ministers who have a right to address to us the same arguments, and remonstrances, and denunciations that Mr. Arnold flings at the Philistine hordes of English Dissenters? To an Episcopal clergyman who once urged upon me the propriety of putting an end to our anomalous condition by joining the Episcopal Church (he could not say "returning to," as Mr. Arnold does, for we never belonged to them), I

made this candid response: There are two ways in which Methodist clergymen and laymen may join the Protestant Episcopal Church. One is, by convincing individuals of the justice of the claims of the "Historic Episcopate." This is done sometimes, and then they go over to the Episcopal Church, as two of my old friends, the Rev. B. F. De Costa, D. D., of New York, and the Rev. J. E. Heald, of the diocese of Connecticut, have done. We wish them Godspeed in their new fields of labor. How fast this process is going forward, they probably know better than we, but it makes little difference with us.

The other way would be to have the two churches united under some such plan of union as Tillotson's Proposals of Comprehension drawn up in 1689. In case the Methodist Episcopal Church should ever feel the same longing after union which the Protestant Episcopal Church shows, they might accept two of these proposals, modified as follows: —

1. "That for the future those who have been ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church be not required to be reordained to render them capable of preferment in the Church.

2. That for the future none be capable of ecclesiastical preferment in the Church of America that shall be ordained in America otherwise than by bishops; and that those who have been ordained only by presbyters, or bishops deriving their ordination from presbyters only, shall not be compelled to renounce their former ordination. But because

many have and still do doubt the validity of such ordination, where episcopal ordination may be had, it shall be sufficient for such persons to receive ordination from a bishop in this or the like form: 'If thou art not ordained, I ordain thee,'" etc.

There would have to be the like provision that bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church should not be required to renounce their former ordination, and the like contingent ordination to remove the scruples of any who question the value of the prior ordination. Some such general plan as this might be taken up in case the desire of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church should ever become general in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Of this there are no present signs. But suppose such a union effected, the next day the "Protestant Methodist Episcopal Church" would have five members and five ministers with Methodist training, views, modes of worship, methods of special activity (like love-feasts, class-meetings, revival services, and camp-meetings), which must suddenly become church institutions. Do our Protestant Episcopal friends desire such a revolution? It does not seem to me to be at the doors; but I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, that I should prophesy. Hence the chances are that we shall have to go on mere Methodists, notwithstanding that still leaves us under the control, in the profound matter of theology, "of a mind of the third order," trusting that Wesley's great distinctive gift, "his genius

for practical godliness," may somehow make us amends.

But it is time to say that Mr. Arnold makes a profound and disgraceful mistake in assuming that Mr. Wesley has put into the creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church his pet notions about assurance, the witness of the Spirit, instantaneous conversion, and instantaneous and complete sanctification, and the possibility of losing grace. He trusted all his peculiar views, which he always affirmed to be the teaching of the English Church itself, to their own intrinsic reasonableness and scripturalness; yet this confidence has always been justified by results. Doctor Stevens says:—

"Wesley provided the theology of American Methodism in a symbol called the 'Articles of Religion,' and these articles were taken from the 'Thirty-nine Articles' of the Anglican Church. They are abridged and sometimes slightly amended, but they convey no tenet which is not received by the Church of England, and they are the only officially recognized standard of Methodist doctrine in America. Wesley's emendations chiefly guard them against interpretations favorable to sacramental regeneration and other Romish errors. He eliminated the supposed Anglican Calvinism, but he does not introduce his own Arminianism, except in the thirty-first Anglican article on the Oblation of Christ, which is Arminian as to the extent of the atonement." [1]

Mr. Arnold makes much of the obstinacy wherewith the English bishops struggled to keep Cal-

[1] Stevens, *Centenary of American Methodism.*

vinism out of the formularies of the Anglican Church. Had they been able to keep it out altogether, that would have been a more illustrious achievement, and Mr. Arnold evidently regrets that they did not succeed in the effort. From the creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church Wesley's hand struck out Calvinism root and branch. No member of the Methodist Church is forbidden to hold the Calvinistic dogmas, but he must not disturb the church by disseminating them. No preacher can find room in Methodist conferences who teaches Calvinism. No legislation from the hand of the founder of Methodism has ever had a more unanimous acceptance than this exclusion of Augustinianism; for the two schemes are irreconcilable. Thus does Doctor Whedon summarize their antagonisms: —

"THE ISSUE BETWEEN ARMINIANISM AND CALVINISM.

"The essential and universal issue which Wesleyan Arminianism has taken against Calvinism may mostly be stated in a single proposition. We deny and they affirm the GENETIC PRINCIPLE that *the divine government may inalternatively secure the sin of any being, and then justly damn him eternally for the sin so secured.* We deny, and they affirm or assume, that *a being can be justly damned for sin he never had the adequate power of avoiding.* We affirm that adequate, unneutralized power to a volition is necessary to responsibility; *unless*, always, *that power has been responsibly forfeited.*

"Calvinism affirms, or assumes, that God may damn

beings for sin which they had no adequate power to avoid, in at least the following seven cases: —

"1. *Original Sin and Ability.* — The whole human race, as fallen in Adam, might justly be damned with an absolutely universal damnation, without any Saviour being interposed, or any adequate power of avoidance. At such a view we stand aghast with abhorrence. Arminians hold that a 'gracious ability' is necessary to the responsibility of fallen man; Taylorism holds that fallen man has still natural ability to repent, — his depravity consisting in the free uniformity of voluntary sinning.

"2. *Eternal Reprobation.* — From the above first Calvinistic point it follows, *à fortiori*, that God might pass by as reprobate, and leave in eternal damnation, those who, without any adequate volitional power of their own, are involved in the guilt of Adam's sin, so that the reprobates are damned for what they never could avoid. About the most appalling of dogmas!

"3. *Infant Damnation.* — *À fortiori*, it is equally just for God to pass by and leave in reprobation and eternal death any or all infants, as they are merely, like all others, damned for what they cannot help. Our Arminianism teaches universal infant salvation.

"4. *Will Power.* — *À fortiori*, again, no adequate volitional ability, or power of choice, is requisite in order to make any choice, or course of choices and actions, justly worthy of eternal damnation; so that, again, any man may be justly and eternally damned for what he cannot help. Taylorism teaches that the agent must possess adequate power of choice contrary to the strongest motive, though it is certain he will never exert it; Arminianism, such power of counter-choice, unbound by any such certainty.

"5. *Foreordained Damnation.* — By an act of irrespective, unforeknowing foreordination, predetermining what shall come to pass, the reprobates passed by, and intrinsically incapable of repentance, are decretively consigned to perpetual sin and eternal death. So that reprobates are again damned for what they cannot help.

"6. *Pagan Damnation.* — All pagans and other persons who never heard of Christ, and never had any means of salvation, are justly damned eternally for that want of faith in Christ which they cannot help.

"7. *Imputation.* — Sin may be justly and literally imputed to the innocent, whether the innocent could avoid it or not; so that Adam's personal sin may with strict justice be imputed as *guilt* in his innocent posterity, and the sins of men may be literally imputed in their guilt to Christ, and he suffer infinite punishment in strict justice; so that a man may, by intrinsic justice, be held responsible for what he did not do and could not help. Arminianism denies the transferability of guilt or literal punishment. The sin of Adam is not imputed to his posterity, nor the sin of man imputed to Christ. Taylorism here is rather Arminian.

"Now, whoever holds any one of these seven points must hold it on the generic principle that a man may be justly damned for what he cannot help; and, having once conceded this principle, he has no defense against either of the others. He must, in strict logic, accept or reject the whole. He can reject any one only by summarily rejecting the generic principle on which the whole are based."

There has never been a controversy carried on against this general system of religious thought in

any of the religious bodies which trace their origin back to the Wesleys. I cannot recall that any clergyman has ever left our church and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church because he was weary of his Arminian theological principles, and desired to adopt and teach the characteristic dogmas of Calvin. Several Methodist clergymen known to me have become pastors of Congregational churches, with a clear and avowed understanding on all sides, that they are to preach their old views with absolute unconstraint.

How great the influence of these anti-Calvinistic views has been in drawing the minds and the hearts of men to the Methodist communion is not easy to say with more than proximate exactness; but the best judges, with the best and widest means of information, agree that it has been a very influential motive. In replying to one of his opponents of the Calvinistic school, Dr. Fisk incidentally testifies to the large share of these doctrines in extending Methodist principles: —

"Does not the reverend gentleman know that a great portion of our members in New England are those who were once members of Calvinistic congregations? Does he not know that they were trained up in these doctrines from their infancy, and have heard them explained and defended from their earliest recollections? Does he not know that Methodism has made its way against the impressions of the nursery, the catechetical instruction of the priest and the schoolmaster, the influence of the pulpit and the press, and in maturer age against the still

stronger influence of academies and colleges? And does he not know, also, that all this has been done in this generation? And shall we now be told that Methodists examine but one side of a question? How astonishing such a charge from a man who can make any pretensions to a knowledge of ecclesiastical matters in this country!" [1]

In speaking of the causes which have modified New England Calvinism, Dr. Fisk proceeds: —

"I allude to the introduction of Unitarianism and Universalism: The proximate causes of the introduction of these sentiments were, among others, probably the following: The Antinomian features of old Calvinism had introduced into the churches a heartless Christianity and a very lax discipline. It was natural, therefore, when religion had come in point of fact to consist chiefly in external performances, for its votaries to seek a theory that would accord with their practice. Unitarianism was precisely such a theory. It is also to be noticed that the state of formality and spiritual death that prevailed, was greatly increased by the withering alliance which then existed between the church and the civil government. This revolution was undoubtedly hastened also by the ultraism, on the one part, and the technical inconsistencies on the other, of the Hopkinsian theory. The elements had long been in motion, and at length they united in an array of numbers and influence that wrested the fairest portions of their ecclesiastical domain from the orthodox churches of Massachusetts, and turned them over, together with the richly endowed university of the State, into the hands of the Unitarians.

[1] *Calvinistic Controversy*, p. 74.

"In Connecticut, Unitarianism, as that term is commonly understood among us, has not prevailed. There is but one Unitarian pastor, properly so called, in the State. This sentiment, however, prevails very extensively, in this and all the other New England States, under the name of Universalism; a sentiment which differs but little from Socinianism, and has its origin doubtless from the same source. About a half a century since, a Calvinistic clergyman, as he was supposed to be up to the day of his death, left a posthumous work, which was published, entitled 'Calvinism Improved.' It was merely an extension of unconditional election and irresistible grace to all, instead of a part. From the premises the reasoning seemed fair, and the conclusions legitimate. This made many converts. And this idea of universal salvation, when once it is embraced, can easily be moulded into any shape, provided its main feature be retained. It has finally pretty generally run into the semi-infidel sentiments of no atonement, no divine Saviour, no Holy Ghost, and no supernatural change of heart, as well as no 'hell, no Devil, no angry God.'

"It may be a matter of some surprise, perhaps, to a superficial observer, or to one not well acquainted with the circumstances of the case, why, in leaving Calvinism, these men should go so far beyond the line of truth. But in this we see the known tendency of the human mind to run into extremes. The repulsive features of the old system drove them far the other way. It ought to be remembered, also, that there were few, if any, who were stationed on the middle line, to arrest and delay the public mind in its fearful recoil from the 'horrible decree.' Had Methodism been as well known

in New England fifty years ago as it is now, it is doubtful if Universalism or Unitarianism would have gained much influence in this country. Late as it was introduced and much as it was opposed, it is believed to have done much towards checking the progress of those sentiments. And perhaps it is in part owing to the earlier introduction and wider spread of Methodism in Connecticut, that Unitarianism has not gained more influence in the State. This is undoubtedly the fact in the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, where Methodism was introduced nearly as early as those other doctrinal views. The result has shown that the foregoing supposition is corroborated by facts in those cases where the experiment has been tried. These remarks may not now be credited, but the time will come, when the prejudices of the day are worn out, that the candid historian will do the subject justice." [1]

If this view of the relations between the dominant Calvinistic systems of New England and the reactions against the Genevan dogmas which have found their embodiment in Universalism and Unitarianism are correct, it will at once appear how indispensable was the appearance of some body of believers who should combine, with an utter and systematic rejection of the dogmatic and metaphysical errors of the popular creed, faith in the authoritative revelations of the Bible, faith in a reasonable theory of human depravity, faith in the possible salvation of every hearer of the gospel message, and faith that no soul can ever be lost forever unless it has wilfully closed its eyes upon the light of

[1] *Calvinistic Controversy*, p. 85.

the gospel, and spurned the very grace by which all souls are saved. The Protestant Episcopal Church was so handicapped by its traditional toleration of Calvinism that it would have been illogical for her to lead a crusade against New England Calvinism. The Methodist Episcopal Church alone was able to put her whole heart into her challenge of those fatal dogmas. That she was in a position to make this protest effectual she owed to the far-sighted sagacity with which John Wesley purged her articles of religion from the last traces of sacerdotalism and Calvinism. Let Matthew Arnold prate as he will of John Wesley as a mind of the third order, Methodists in all the world will gratefully remember that, in his unique position as their providential legislator, he gave them in substance that noble Greek theology before which a great future is so visibly opening. Nor was this a slight benediction, since there are to-day, in all branches of the Methodist Church, 5,500,000 members.

Of course, distrust of Calvinistic dogma was not the only motive which drew so many thousands of people from the other New England churches to the Methodist fold. The belief in instantaneous conversion, of the witness of the Spirit of God to his own work in renewing the sinner, and the possibility of constant and unbroken communion with God, have very widely commended themselves to popular favor. The doctrine of Christian Perfection has always and everywhere commended itself to not a few of the most pious and devout souls in

all churches. This experience was the joy and the crown of Wilbur Fisk's life.

Whoever compares the development of Methodist theology as it has been shaped by Wesley, Watson, Fletcher, Pope, Summers, and Raymond, and controversialists like Fisk, Hodgson, and Whedon, with the works of the English Platonists, or those of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius, will see that the Methodist leaders have not yet fully reshaped that theology for modern uses and necessities. That theology taught that God is immanent in the universe; that humanity has its life and being in Christ; that the divine mercy covers the whole race of man in its promises and gifts; that the ethical transformation of human character is the grand proof of the Christian religion; that Christ dwells both in nature and the human soul; that for the soul, by virtue of its original constitution in the image of God, it "becomes the law of its being to fulfill its possibilities, and to rise to full resemblance to God;" that Greek philosophy as well as Jewish prophecy was a preparation for Christ; that the most essential quality in God is love, and freedom the fundamental trait of man; that ignorance and an impaired will are the chief obstructions to salvation; that life is a probation for all, but may be made for any a divine education for eternal bliss; that in enlightened human reason the best guide is found to the understanding of the Bible; that all ecclesiastical institutions are to be treated with honor and respect, but

apostolical succession, or the necessity of recognizing the authority of the local bishop to become a genuine Christian, or to enjoy valid sacraments, are not essential elements in the system of the Christian Church.

The two great truths to which Wesleyan theology has everywhere appealed are, the freedom of the human will, and the indwelling of Christ in the redeemed soul. This latter doctrine lies at the root of the Wesleyan doctrine of the witness of the spirit. This indwelling of Christ in the redeemed soul is a return to the primal constitution of man before he had ever known sin at all, and so is a natural condition supernaturally restored in redemption. Hence the exalted joy which peals out in every portrayal of this experience of salvation from the beginning until this hour.

The probable reason why these points have had a larger share than other elements of that noble system in the thought and teaching of the Wesleyans is the fact that its teachers have been rather leaders in a great religious revival than leisurely students and professors of theology. Such men naturally seize, and urge upon the attention of the public, those religious and philosophical truths which speak most impressively to the conscience and intellect of men. Such men may be a little slow to make out that the conception of God which has ruled and inspired that theology is an even greater advance upon the conception of God entertained and advocated by Augustine and Calvin

than the Whedonian conception of freedom is over the Edwardean.

The immanence of God in nature and in the human mind, the natural relationship of humanity to Christ, the sacredness of the act of personal volition in which every redeemed spirit renounces self-rule and puts itself into the hands of its divine instructor, and the fact that these critical choices are nowise connected with the sacraments, are points which show the structural sympathy of that system with Wesleyanism. The Wesleyan theology will not attain its full coherence and significance until all these elements have fully resumed their proper place and vitality.

It is along this line of living growth in the churches which derive their theology from John Wesley that this noble and comprehensive theological system will find the requisite conditions for its rapid and perfect growth. Here the revelations of the New Testament will always be regarded as the enlightening and renewing power that shall yet make all things new, which are still alien to its spirit in the church and the world.

How urgent the call for such a broad and normal development of that theology is, may be seen from the distortions that theology has undergone in the hands of Schleiermacher. He assigns to the "Christian consciousness" not only power to add to the teachings of the New Testament, but also to revise and correct them. This he proceeds to do by denying personality to God and immortality to

the soul, thus making freedom a dream, morality impossible, and any permanent and personal relation between Christ and the human soul a delusion and a snare. In the Greek theology, Christ is always the master and the instructor of the human soul, but here Christ himself is corrected by the "Christian consciousness" of later times, in respect to all the essential features of his theology, in the most remorseless manner. It is an absolute reversal of the main idea of the Greek theology that we witness here. This reversal of rôles between the great instructor of souls and the souls he instructs is fatal to all Christianity. This folly Methodist theology has never committed, and doubtless never will commit. Here lies its safety and its promise.

Incomparably the best discussion of this subject for the general reader is Doctor A. V. G. Allen's "The Continuity of Christian Thought," a broad-minded, impartial, and scholarly work. Of church historians, Pressensé's account is best. Absolutely fascinating is John Tulloch's "Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century," as a picture of the English school from which the Wesleys drew their theology.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ITINERANT MINISTER.

In the brief space at our command, we cannot follow Wilbur Fisk in any detailed exhibition of his ministerial labors. We shall try only to show in what spirit and with what success he performed the ordinary work of the ministry, and how these soon conducted him to the special educational activity of his subsequent career.

The pastoral life of Mr. Fisk was very brief, covering less than three years in all, since he became the presiding elder of the Vermont district at the conclusion of his stay in Charlestown. Three years he was a presiding elder, and then began the educational work which was to fill all his remaining years. As he had no foresight of the brevity of his pastoral career, he set about it with such earnestness and care as would have become a life set apart solely to such duties.

His first appointment, in 1818, was to Craftsbury circuit in Vermont, about thirty miles from his home. His first preaching-place there was in a private house. The population then was small and scattered, and at first his message seemed to make no impression. This bred in him great

searchings of heart. He thought that where so much careful and painstaking labor had been put forth by his predecessors, he might properly look for speedy results of his labors. As Father Taylor once said of another, "He carried both seed-basket and sickle to the field together." But so faithful was he in visiting his flock, in house-to-house conversation with all classes of his hearers, and so plain and impressive were his sermons, that his expectation of finding a chance to use his sickle proved well founded. A removal of the public services to the court-house became necessary; a revival of religion spread far and wide, and drew in many of the best citizens as converts. A church was built for the rapidly growing society, so that the pastorate of Wilbur Fisk marked a new era in the life of the Methodist Church there, for he admitted eighty-four converts into the church. Notwithstanding his frail health and the severity of the climate, he went through all the routine duties of an itinerant minister. He kept a full list of the persons converted to Christ during his stay at Craftsbury, — a list that may still be seen among his papers. It is said that Mr. Fisk used to read over the list sometimes, and pray earnestly that God would fill them with his grace and heavenly benediction. They were, indeed, noticeable for the strength and purity of their religious character.

At the Lynn Conference in 1819, Mr. Fisk was appointed pastor of the Methodist Church at Charlestown, Mass. Here the church was small,

feeble, and in debt. There was little on the face of things to encourage the hope for a successful pastorate; but he turned toward the new work with obedience and hope. The first sermon preached there shows how well he knew that God alone could help him, and how fully he thought the Lord could render his ministry fruitful. Here are the resolutions which he fixed on to aid him in making the best use of his time: —

1. To retire at nine and rise at five.
2. To appropriate one hour to my morning devotions.
3. Allow one hour for breakfast, family devotion, and such incidental circumstances as may demand my attention.
4. Will write two hours each day.
5. Will spend two hours in some regular scientific or literary study.
6. Will spend one hour in miscellaneous reading.
7. One hour for my devotions at noon.
8. One hour for dinner.
9. One hour each day in preparing my discourses for the Sabbath.
10. The remainder of the day will generally be devoted to visiting.
11. Whenever constrained to break in upon my regular course, I will endeavor to prevent loss of time by returning to it as soon as may be, and then attend to those branches which my judgment dictates it will be most improper to neglect; at all

times remembering not to curtail my devotions, or my preparations for the Sabbath.

12. When, in the course of my employments, a passage of Scripture occurs to my mind, or a striking thought occurs to me, I will take the first opportunity to commit it to writing.

13. In my devotions it shall be my particular duty to pray for a deepening of the work of grace in my heart, and for a revival of the work of God in the town where I labor.

14. I must not dine out on the Sabbath.

The criticism which one ought to make upon such a scheme of daily labor is, that there is no provision for recreation in it. At five o'clock every day he was to begin his morning programme of varied mental and devotional employments, and, his dinner once down, the rest of the day was to be devoted to pastoral visiting. With his make-up, his intense convictions of duty, his notion that his devotions and his visiting alike should be directed towards a revival of religion in his new charge, he ought to have secured two or three hours of exercise in the open air. Probably he fancied that he should get, in his visits to his people, as much air and exercise as he really needed. But true pastoral visiting, such as he was certain to devote himself to, is quite as heavy a draft on one's nervous vigor as any study. Such an unbroken round of labors would be certain beforehand to bring on broken health. But he set about his new

life with the firmest purpose to do his best for his people, at whatever risk to himself. From the very beginning his preaching made a decided impression, so that the little congregation was greatly enlarged. With his characteristic humility, he explained this growth by the existence of an ugly quarrel in the churches whose attendants sought his church. He noted various topics down for careful study and inquiry, some so wide-ranging they would have demanded years for a full investigation, and others relating to Christian experience. He asks: —

"How far may those bodily exercises, which many religiously affected persons are influenced by, proceed from the operation of a good spirit, and how far from that of a bad spirit? How may we be able to distinguish between them?"

With such theological and practical questions stirring in his mind, he kept about the routine duties of his calling, until he attended a camp-meeting held at Wellfleet, Cape Cod, the 10th of August, 1819. To interpret what happened to Mr. Fisk there, one should bear in mind the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or perfect love. This doctrine Wilbur Fisk held so strongly that he had given this belief to his betrothed, Miss Peck, as one of the reasons why he felt compelled to enter the Methodist ministry. From the questions noted down above, it is evident that the "bodily exercises" that had been reported to him as

happening in certain cases, were objects of special suspicion to his mind. These questions were all settled for him at that meeting. In a record made August 19th he tells his experiences there. He had been earnestly longing for more of God, yet went to the meeting without any special impression. Tuesday he rather looked on than joined in the worship. As he was passing one of the Boston tents, a lady asked him to stay in that tent. She then told him that, on the way down, an assurance had been given her that Mr. Fisk would receive the blessing of a holy heart at that meeting. "Her words thrilled through me in an indescribable manner. I wept a few moments, I trembled, I fell. But Satan drew a veil of unbelief over my mind. They prayed for me, but all was dark, — my heart was harder than ever." And so the struggle went on, growing in its intensity and depth, until fearfulness and anguish laid hold upon him. He was beset with a sudden fear that he should never possess that most priceless pearl, a clean heart, but certain passages of Scripture seemed to break the force of such fears.

"Thursday morning we had a familiar conversation concerning heart-holiness. Some of the holy women prayed for me again, but without a sensible answer. I preached that day with considerable liberty, felt my mind more and more given up to the work, but thought, if I had been through such struggles and had not obtained what I was seeking, *much more* remained to be endured. And I felt willing to endure anything. About the setting of the sun, word came that souls were

begging for prayers in Brother Taylor's tent. I went immediately in, and, behold, God was there. We united in prayer, when one after the other, to the number of four or five, were converted. We rose to sing. I looked up to God, and thanked him for hearing prayer, and cried, 'Lord, why not hear prayer for my soul?' My strength began to fail me while I looked in faith. 'Come, Lord, and come now. Thou wilt come. Heaven opens, my Saviour smiles, — glory, glory! Oh, glory to God! Help me, my brethren, to praise the Lord.' The scene that was now opened to my view I can never describe. I could say, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee! I love thee above everything.' I was humbled in the dust, that God should so bless such an undeserving soul. I could look back upon my past life, and see how he had led me even while I was in disobedience; how he had supported me even in the midst of temptation. And now nothing was wanting but to snap life's tender thread to let the soul fly away to heaven. I sang, I shouted, and methinks the spectators must have thought me filled with new wine. O my God, how dost thou bring to naught the wisdom of the world! When we would be wise, we must become fools that we may be wise. Then we shall have the wisdom that is from above. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? how shall I praise him for all his mercies? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name."

This wonderful event is described in a letter under date of 1839, written by a sympathetic spectator, Rev. Jotham Horton, on whose mind an indelible impression was left. We cite so much as concerns Wilbur Fisk: —

"But for nothing was the meeting more remarkable than the work of holiness among believers. The attention of the church had been directed to that subject by the Rev. T. Merritt and the seniors in the ministry. Many sought and found the pearl of great price. An awful but delightful serenity marked the countenances of believers. Our beloved Brother Fisk was among the preachers present. Like others, his mind was deeply wrought upon for holiness. But the habits of philosophical investigation, which his previous education had induced, made him exceedingly careful lest the fruits of imagination under high devotional feeling, or the effervescence of strong religious excitement, should be substituted for the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. Hence the extraordinary exercises, which in some cases were exhibited, were observed by him with a jealous scrutiny.

"In one of the larger tents, where a number of those most deeply experienced in the things of God united in earnest supplication, Mr. Fisk was present, and so overwhelming were the manifestations of the power of God that he sank to the ground. This was as unexpected to others as to himself. He had just been engaged in vocal prayer, and one sentiment which he had most devoutly expressed was that no influence, save that of the Holy Spirit might give character to the devotion in which they were engaged. He was in the very act of guarding against strange fires, and supplicating a holy baptism, when nature sank under the power of God. The meeting progressed in great power and glory. I saw Brother Merritt but a few moments after, and mentioned to him what was doing in the company. . . . He repaired to the place, and, after standing a few mo-

ments gazing with wonder and admiration upon a work which bore such evident marks of the finger of God, he remarked to several standing by, 'I never saw the power of God so displayed on earth.'

"When Wilbur Fisk had so far recovered his physical strength as to be able to be taken to his own tent, there was held another season of holy communion. Being unable to stand, he was supported by ministerial brethren. His language and whole appearance had something in them more than human, indicating that his soul then glowed with ardors of love allied to those of angels. From this period, Mr. Fisk dated his experience of perfect love."

It was truly characteristic of this honest and conscientious man that he should give such critical study to all the elements and phases of his own spiritual life, and those of the company around him at Wellfleet. He was eager to learn the exact truth from the study of the word of God, from the experience of mature Christians, and through intercession with Christ, that he might be able to offer a pure offering in his approaches to God. It is certain that the marvelous scenes at Wellfleet made a permanent change in Wilbur Fisk's religious life. Before that, he had passed through seasons when he doubted the fact of his acceptance with God, his personal interest in Christ, and even the truth of Christianity itself. When a young minister consulted him at one of the sessions of the New England Conference concerning just such a series of difficulties as Mr. Fisk had passed

through himself, he told him that he had been delivered from such things forever at the Wellfleet meeting. But, of course, the removal of such spiritual obstructions is only one of the indispensable prerequisites to the full development of the life of perfect purity, perfect faith, perfect love, perfect humility, and meekness. We have further light in respect to his spiritual condition and views in a letter

TO HIS SISTER MARY.

CHARLESTOWN, *November* 20, 1819.

I think my confinement has proved a blessing to me. I find every grace must be tried. I had been previously sorely tempted in many ways. And because the infirmities of the body sometimes weighed down the soul, Satan would say, 'You have lost the blessing you received at Wellfleet' (for he was not permitted to say I received none). However, in the midst of these and various other temptations, which caused me to be in heaviness, my faith was not moved from its object. But this seemed to be my state. In the work of sanctification upon the heart, there appear to be two distinct operations: one is, to empty the soul of sin and everything offensive; and another is, to fill it with love. 1. The strong man armed is bound and cast out; 2. The stronger takes possession. God was pleased, however, in my case, to empty and fill in the same moment. But to try my faith, or for some other purpose, that fullness was, after a time, occasionally withdrawn. Still I could not discover that there was anything in my heart *contrary* to the will of God. In this situation, Satan assailed me. Then I had reason to thank God

for fathers and mothers in the church that could both instruct me and pray for me, but more especially that Jesus is my friend; for I felt him so. I prayed the Lord to fill me and sink me into his will before I left the chamber. The Lord heard. O my sister, what a blessed Saviour we have! He saves his people *from* their sins. He fills them with his fullness. It was not that ecstasy of animation which I have sometimes felt, but it was a holy sinking into the will of God. Often, ever since that time, while I am sitting in my chamber, looking at what the Saviour has done for me and for the world, 'my heart is dissolved in thankfulness, and my eyes are melted to tears.' My best hours are in retirement, holding communion with my Saviour. At these times I think of you, in your seclusion from the world, and think what blessings you may enjoy, if you seek and obtain all that is your privilege. Every day I bear your case to our heavenly Father. O sister! be in earnest. You must be holy; but it will cost you a struggle. Though you have not wandered as far as I did, yet you continued too long 'a slain witness.' But perhaps the Lord will bring you in a way you have not known. Leave with him entirely the manner how, and the means by which, you are to be brought there. Ask the Lord for just what you want, — a victory over inbred corruption, a fullness of love, an abiding witness of the Spirit. Stop not to debate with the enemy the question whether you ever were converted. The question is, What do I want? And, when you have discovered your wants, carry them to him in whom all fullness dwells, — to Jesus. The very name, sinful and unworthy as you may feel yourself, will afford you encouragement. What says the angel? 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus.'

Why, heavenly messenger, why call his name Jesus? 'Because *he shall save his people from their sins.*' "

From this time forth, Wilbur Fisk never changed his estimate of the nature of the work of grace wrought in his soul at the Wellfleet camp-meeting; nor was there anything in his spirit, or speech, or conduct, public or private, which ever led men associated with him to think his conception of that work a mistaken one. On the contrary, the testimony of all his associates in the various positions he filled was uniform and outspoken that he did live up even to the high standard he professed.

Dr. Holdich, whose long association with Dr. Fisk at Wesleyan University renders him well informed, says: —

"From this time he has been heard to say that he never laid his head upon his pillow at night without feeling that, if he never waked in this world, all would be well. Prior to this, he was often subject to desponding, gloomy seasons: we heard him say long afterwards that he knew no gloomy hours; his mind was always serene and happy."

This wonderful baptism of the Holy Spirit made certain permanent changes in his theological views. He had learned, in those hours of passionate yearning after God, the profound lesson of his utter dependence on Christ for salvation. Nothing that he was, nothing that he had done or could do, nothing that he had suffered, and nothing that any creature could do for him, was of any avail before God as a ground for pardon or sanctification. This

he had learned, not from books or human teachers, but in the mysterious and awful struggle after the perfect submission of his own will to the will of a holy God, and his passionate pleadings with God that even in this life the almighty Saviour would bestow on him the utmost grace of possible salvation from sin. After such an experience, any man's conception of his utter sinfulness, and of the sole sufficiency of Christ's blood to cleanse, must remain forever changed. The incarnation of Christ was regarded as a necessary means of revealing the nature and especially the love of God to mankind. The Gospels must be studied and understood as the records of the life of God incarnate on earth. But the culminating act of this manifestation of the love of God the Father for lost men was the sacrificial, the atoning, death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Contrasted with the worthlessness and helplessness of all human merit, strength, and intercession was the omnipotence of the gracious intercession of Christ. That had availed, had brought him pardon for sin, peace with God, and purity of heart. Of him he gratefully sang: —

> "Thy offering still continues new,
> Thy vesture keeps its bloody hue,
> Thou stand'st the ever-slaughtered Lamb,
> Thy priesthood still remains the same."

What Christ had done for him upon the cross he believed was done equally for all men, so that all men were called to the same grace and might be partakers of the same salvation he had found.

He did not believe that God had given any man that delusive freedom which would make men justly responsible for a life of universal obedience to the will of God, and yet withheld from them that special and gracious call (always given to the elect) without which they would not, even though they could be, saved. From him we hear no dreadful phrases about God "saving all he wisely can." He thinks God would not be love to such lost souls. Writing to Miss Peck, he states these views at some length: —

"Love to God is something that can be felt in the soul, something that Satan himself cannot counterfeit. If you have this genuine love, you know it. Do not, my dear, suffer the enemy to harass and disturb you on account of your motives in loving God. None but a good motive can induce you to love God in his true character. Any motive, then, that leads to this, lay hold of. Is your soul melted into tenderness and love while contemplating what the Saviour has done for you? Is your soul transported with delight from a view, by faith, of an expected paradise? Let these be motives to draw you on to love and obedience. This will bring you nearer to God. . . .

"On the subject of loving God 'for what he is in and of himself,' you have quoted a passage which seems to convey the idea that we ought to and can love God even if he does not love us. According to my view, I could no more love a God that did not love me than reconcile the widest contradictions."

In writing to another friend he tells her: —

"The Tempter would make you believe, if he could, that yours is a partial God; that he has a few choice blessings, which he bestows upon individuals, — preachers, perhaps, and a few others, — but they cannot be obtained by all. Believe him not; he is dishonoring your God by such a suggestion."

To his Aunt Palmer he wrote: —

"Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, to professor or non-professor; those who have been once renewed and those who never were renewed; Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Scythian; worthy in their own estimation, or unworthy; rich or poor, sick or well: all must come to Christ in the same manner, and *as to their rights are on an equality, only with this exception:* those that see themselves the most wretched, their case the most difficult, themselves the most unworthy, their wants the most pressing, have the best claim, and are the fittest vessels for the Saviour to show his mercy in. Dear aunt, let me exhort you to take Christ for your *all.*"

It can easily be understood that a ministry begun under such auspices as marked the beginning of Mr. Fisk's at Charlestown must of necessity be a fruitful ministry. Such diligence in general study, such careful preparation for preaching, such unsparing pastoral visitation, such a sense of the priceless value of souls, such a feeling of the shortness of time and the solemnity of its due employment, and such rich and living experience of Christ's salvation, must have given that ministry a unique character. And so it really was. His

congregations grew steadily larger; there were many conversions, and some inquirers after the highest life, whom he trained with the most conscientious fidelity. A single sermon in a strange pulpit was sometimes made instrumental in the conversion of souls; for he was diligent in aiding other pastors in revival services, or in holiness meetings. On Charlestown bridge he one day fell in with a boyish fish-seller. Mr. Fisk bowed to him, asked his name, and kept his eye upon him, until the two had become acquainted. Learning that the boy was neglecting to go to church, notwithstanding his mother's advice and example, he invited the lad to come to his church in Charlestown. For this bright-eyed boy, whether on the bridge or in church, Mr. Fisk always had a bow, a smile, or a pleasant and earnest word. So began the fascination of Isaac Rich for Wilbur Fisk, and so it came that Mr. Rich left nearly all his great estate to educational objects in the Methodist Church. There was a universal demand for Mr. Fisk's return to Charlestown the second year, and he was accordingly returned.

He attended the commencement exercises of Brown University, and received the degree of A. M. in 1820.

Under all circumstances, Wilbur Fisk labored bravely on, seeking to make full proof of his ministry. He had gone quite beyond the bounds of reasonable prudence in his untiring exertions in doing good. He preached three times a Sunday

and two or three times a week. Every night he was at some religious meeting, and his afternoons were devoted to pastoral calls. This was sinning against light, too, since he had already suffered from a cough, from severe catarrhs and hemorrhages. In November, 1820, he had, what he should have expected, a severe hemorrhage of the lungs. Instead of preaching, he was laid up from work all winter; he had five hemorrhages, and kept his chamber until March. The physicians gave him up to die, his father came to see him depart to a better world, and all chance of life had failed.

"But on the very night when his friends were gathered around his bed expecting every moment to be his last, his church, with the churches in Boston, including some of other denominations, were engaged in solemn and importunate prayer for his recovery. The meetings were called with special reference to his case; and He who said the prayer of faith shall save the sick, rebuked the disorder. His symptoms began to improve from that night. Mr. Fisk always believed that he was raised up in answer to prayer."

Let us trust and hope so, with good Dr. Holdich. But the Lord was sore displeased with Wilbur Fisk for the cruel and irreligious way in which he treated his own body. Had he or anybody else treated a beast with half the severity with which this educated, devout, and sanctified person treated his own body, temple of the Holy Ghost though it was, he might have been brought to trial for

habitual cruelty, and convicted he certainly would have been. It is evident that the Lord had set his face sternly against the sin of Wilbur Fisk in the matter, as we may see from the fact that he was just barely suffered to escape alive. If the Lord did, in the crisis of threatened death, turn back the power of disease, one should not forget that the cure stopped at a point where the patient's condition was a sort of standing warning against any more such desperate madness of zeal for the future. Had it pleased Him, His power might have strengthened the enfeebled frame so that Wilbur Fisk might have gone back to his delightful employment at once. But He visibly meant to utter a vehement protest against any more such sins against one's physical frame. First, notice the fact that this eloquent preacher, this gifted and sanctified spirit, was not allowed for two years to speak a word from the pulpit. He was obliged to go home, to give up reading, and to keep in the open air, to ride on horseback up and down his native mountains, to diet carefully, to swallow obnoxious drugs, to feel many a fear that he never should get well, or that his future condition would never allow him to preach again. Of course, Mr. Fisk was not conscious that he was setting his face against the will of God by his excesses in labor, and so he did not have the pangs of a guilty conscience to endure. In fact, he seems a little more at ease about his conduct than was desirable. Thus he writes to Mrs. Goodwin, one of his Charlestown friends: —

"You recollect, in our Minutes of Conference, we have, among others, this question: 'Who have died this year?' Then follow the names of our deceased brethren. In this catalogue, if you are careful to read it over year after year, you will find, ere long, the name of your much-obliged friend, Wilbur Fisk. To the short account that may there be given, you may add with your pencil this: His early departure excited in his breast but one regret, which was, that he had to leave the war before the cause of truth obtained a signal triumph."

It was not until May, 1822, that Mr. Fisk resumed preaching. Yet he dared not assume the burdens of the pastoral office that year. After the next September, there was such a sudden and marked improvement in his health, that he took up the cares and duties of the pastor's calling in room of a preacher who had been compelled to drop his work. Finding by actual trial that he was now fully equal to the duties of his vocation, he thought best to marry the lady to whom he had been engaged, through good health and through poor health, for seven years. This was Miss Ruth Peck, of Providence. Prior to the marriage, he seems to have known her chiefly by correspondence, and possibly that mode of procedure was somewhat discredited by its results in this instance. This event in his personal history was entered upon in a sensible and religious spirit, for he wrote to his betrothed a few days before their marriage:[1]—

[1] The marriage occurred June 9, 1823.

"It is my ardent prayer that Christ would unite us to Himself, as the branch is united to the vine; that, while we may love each other with pure hearts fervently we may love Him supremely; and have, above all things, an experimental knowledge of that mystical union that exists between Christ and His church, so that hereafter, when Christ shall come to take home His weary bride, you may go into the marriage supper of the Lamb, and there be met by your unworthy but truly affectionate

"W. FISK."

The belief is a deeply rooted one, both at Wilbraham, where the Fisks resided five years, and at Middletown, where they lived nine years, that this was not the happiest of marriages. Wilbur Fisk won everybody's approval as a son, brother, son-in-law, friend, and counselor; so that there can be no doubt that he would be strictly and even generously attentive to all his conjugal duties. Indeed, no suspicion of fault or defect in his conduct in that sacred relation has ever gone abroad; and if there had been, Mrs. Fisk constantly speaks in her letters of his faultless and chivalrous devotion to her as compared with that of ordinary husbands. For the forty-five years of her widowhood she told the same story. Was this unhappy tradition true or false? One who has heard it from his boyhood up is rather apt to read their correspondence with the aim of getting at the truth. There are passages in Mrs. Fisk's letters to her husband that might be construed as illustrations of its verity. Eleven months after the marriage, he was absent five or

six weeks, attending the General Conference at Baltimore, when Mrs. Fisk writes from Lyndon, May 29th, saying: —

"The belief that you sincerely love me, even though now far separated, gives a zest to all my duties, and lightens all my trials. But, Wilbur, I often feel that I am unworthy of it; and when supplicating my Heavenly Father to grant me the qualifications I need to deserve it, with streaming eyes do I beseech Him to grant you all that patience you need to bear with me. Could tears wash my infirmities, weaknesses, and errors from memory, they would be obliterated."

There are people to whom such language will seem confirmation strong as Holy Writ of the suspicions entertained against Mrs. Fisk. If the habit of accepting petitions at the throne of grace in room of affidavits should spread among biographers, it would add a new terror to communion with God, and be an effective persuasion to irreligion. And, besides this, the lady's letters to other people, even when dealing with less weighty subjects than personal faults, are rather apt to be lachrymose and pyrotechnical in their rhetoric, without any great provocation. If these jealous suspicions had any justification in fact, certainly the conduct of Wilbur Fisk deserves our admiration. He made nobody a confidant of his troubles, made no complaint to others, sought no sympathy from others; and when his wife carelessly made friends or strangers eye-witnesses or ear-witnesses of her vexation, treated all such facts as non-

existent. In all his intercourse with her, in all his references to her, in all his letters to her, he made much of her virtues and nothing of her faults. In all the letters I have read, not one personal defect is mentioned, while this or that good quality is generously lauded. It is only when one reflects on the things and virtues which are not praised by a husband so ready to commend, that one realizes how truthful as well as generous this correspondence is. Had Ruth Fisk been like Lyman Beecher's heavenly-minded Roxana, her husband's praises would have been as unstinted and comprehensive as Beecher's. What love letters such a lover as Wilbur Fisk might have been would have left behind for our wonder!

In his last intercourse with her on earth, there was the like generous appreciation of his wife's virtues, merits, and exceptional exposure to trouble. She was overwhelmed with sorrow when told that his death was at hand. In taking his final leave of the professors of Wesleyan University, among other things it is said: —

"He commended his afflicted wife to their care and sympathy, observing, 'I believe she has added years to my life by her constant care and nursing. You will love her for my sake when I am gone.' The wife of one of the professors assured him they had done so, and would do so still."

The way in which this promise was kept to Dr. Fisk's widow is a signal instance of his power to

influence others. The decease of her husband left Mrs. Fisk with only her venerable mother and an adopted daughter, Martha. Presently they both had followed Dr. Fisk to the grave. There were visits paid by Mrs. Fisk to the parents and sister of her departed husband, at Lyndon; but as the elder Fisks soon became too much broken in health to travel much themselves, and too dependent upon the care of their only surviving child to admit of her leaving them to themselves on such journeys, there were few and infrequent visits at first; and soon none at all were possible. For some reason, the Peck kinsmen were never known to visit Mrs. Fisk after her widowhood; so that she was thrown very greatly upon the kindness and sympathy of her Middletown friends for society and aid. It became one of the unwritten laws of the Wesleyan University faculty that they must all have a part in taking care of Mrs. Fisk. A son of one of those families once said: "I was brought up at home, so that I always felt that I must always look out for our family *and Mrs. Fisk.* It was so with every boy or girl that belonged to that set of households. She was the common care of them all."

Of course, it was natural for people who had been linked together so long and so pleasantly as the professors of Wesleyan University had been with Wilbur Fisk, to show personal kindness to his widow; but they did something far better than that, since they made it such a point of honor and

pride to show her kindness that, when the last associate in the faculty of Dr. Fisk had disappeared from Middletown, she was just as faithfully regarded as ever. As she grew older, she either would not have or could not keep any servant with her long. She grew too feeble to attend to her own wants, but was reluctant to abandon the little house, at a corner of the college grounds, which had become her home on her husband's death. There some member of the faculty families daily saw that she had her food for meals; her errands about town done; her coal, wood, and water abundantly at hand. Sometimes students made it their daily care to do anything she wished done, all through their college life. In some respects she was a spoiled child to the last; for nobody could be certain of satisfying her in such humble offices and services. The affecting part of her situation was, that she lived only in and to her husband's memory. She knew little about the strange world which had grown up around her, and had no interest in later generations save as they were somehow related to her husband's career.

CHAPTER V.

THE EDUCATOR. — WESLEYAN ACADEMY.

WHEN Wilbur Fisk was invited to become principal of Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, Mass., his pious mother urged him for the sake of his own soul not to accept the new work. She appealed to his own experience in such matters. Had he not declined in his interest in religious truth and spirituality of life while he was a student in Peacham Academy, and continued in a backslidden condition during all his successive connections with the University of Vermont and Brown University? He could not challenge the truth of her assertions, but he did deny that he had been under any compulsion to backslide at school or college, and affirmed that schools and colleges could be so organized and managed as to make them intensify instead of deadening the piety of the students. This was one of his most serious purposes in all his career as an educator. Nay, he maintained that such schools and colleges might be made hotbeds of revival influence.

In this opinion, Mrs. Fisk represented the prevailing view in the churches of all orders. How did the churches of that period come to have so

poor an opinion of the colleges of the country? In these times, such an idea could only be founded on ignorance of the actual condition of the colleges, and could be refuted with an overwhelming array of argument and illustration. At that period, not only did pious and intelligent people in all the churches cherish such ideas about colleges, but spiritually-minded clergymen of all denominations shared this notion. We know how powerful were the influences of unbelief and secularity at Harvard, since they at last swept her wholly away from her moorings to the faith of the fathers, and made her the disseminator of Unitarianism. We know that at Brown University the same leaven of unbelief was at work.

In his essay on "Prayer for Colleges," Professor Tyler, of Amherst College, has shown that this state of things was not peculiar to this college or that, but was universal. We quote some details as to the condition of Yale College: —

"It was a period of declension in the churches also, and of infidelity and immorality in the country, when the disastrous effects of our own Revolutionary War (we mean, of course, the moral and religious effects), and still more of the French Revolution, infected, like a plague, all classes of the people. . . . In 1795 only eleven undergraduates are known to have been professors of religion; about four years after, the number was reduced to four or five; and at one communion only a single undergraduate was present, the others being out of town. A surviving member of the class of 1783

remembers only three professors of religion in the class of 1782, and only three or four each in several of the preceding classes. In his own class, which was blessed with a revival, there were eleven. In the darkest time, just at the close of the century, there was only about one professor of religion to a class. The state of things was even worse in the churches."

When Lyman Beecher, who belonged to the class of 1797, speaks of the religious state of the college, we get the graphic touches of an ear and eye witness: —

"Before Dr. Dwight came, college was in a most ungodly state. The college church was almost extinct. Most of the students were skeptical, and rowdies were plenty. Wine and liquors were kept in many rooms; intemperance, profanity, gambling, and licentiousness were common. I hardly know how I escaped. Was invited to play, once, in a class-mate's room. I did so and won. Next day I won again, then lost, and ended in debt. I saw immediately whereunto that would grow; obtained leave of absence, went home for a week, till cured of that mania, and never touched a card afterward. That was the day of the infidelity of the Tom Paine school. Boys that dressed flax in the barn, as I used to, read Tom Paine, and believed him; I read and fought him all the way. Never had any propensity to infidelity. But most of the class before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert."

Hence there can be no doubt that the religious condition of the American colleges themselves, in the disheartening period between the acknowledg-

ment of our independence and 1820, was such as to justify the fear that they fostered impiety and irreligion. This evident fact was enough to make many Methodists reluctant to send their sons to be educated where they would be in danger of losing their spirituality. There was another source of danger for Methodist students in the colleges of the land, since, even if they did retain their piety, they would be likely to lose their antipathy to Calvinism and enter the ministry of other churches. Wilbur Fisk's chum at Brown University thought Methodists fanatics, and in this he represented the universal sentiment of New England. Still the Methodists could not well hesitate about founding schools of their own, since they saw the best and ablest of their youth entering the schools and colleges of other churches.

As all the colleges of the land were under the direction of their theological foes, the need became very urgent that they should establish colleges of their own for the school-training of those who would have such training somewhere. Nay, it was plain that no church could perform its proper work for the country which should leave the education of its young people in the hands of its theological adversaries. Still it was only the clearest-sighted who could adequately realize how great would be the advantages of making Methodist colleges the peers of the best in endowments and opportunities, while keeping them full of revival influences. Yet these few had been able to impress their senti-

ments on the New England Conference so deeply that, in 1816, action was taken by that body to secure the establishment of a literary institution in New England.

The New Market Academy was founded at this time by the New England Annual Conference. It was after much previous discussion that a preachers' club, which met at New Market, N. H., resolved to secure the establishment of a Methodist Academy at once. New Market was a pleasant, healthy, and moral place. Besides, it was the residence of Rev. John Brodhead, a man of mark in New England Methodist circles, a good preacher, a wise counselor, a man who more than once had represented his party in the State Senate, and his district in the House of Representatives at Washington. His great influence made him a pioneer in the establishment of the New Market Academy. But the local pledges of the New Market people to the school never were fully redeemed, so that a general subscription was made mainly by the ministers. Thus was raised $755. The largest sum was paid by Rev. Martin Ruter, $80.

A small building was erected for school use. The conference was to provide a preceptor for five years; the receipts were to be at its disposal; the salary was not to exceed $500. There was some opposition to the plan in the body; but the leaders, like Soule, Hedding, Brodhead, Merritt, and Pickering, overbore all resistance. The scheme was adopted at the session of 1817.

The first teacher was Mr. Moses White, a Methodist, a graduate of the University of Vermont, pious and able. Ten pupils were on hand the first day, and seventeen more before the term ended. They were largely day scholars, like any country academy, with a conference attachment. From the start, both sexes were educated together. The tuition paid Mr. White's salary of $400.

A board of trustees was incorporated by the New Hampshire legislature in June, 1818. On July 10 the first trustee meeting was held. Amos Binney was chosen president, and Daniel Filmore secretary. The board of trustees was to lay the whole situation of the school before the conference at every session, and annual visitors were sent to examine the school, and report on all its concerns to the conference. The following course of study was adopted: Class I., Reading, Writing, and English Grammar; Class II., Geography and Astronomy; Class III., Latin, Greek, and French; Class IV., Mathematics and the Rudiments of Natural Philosophy; Class V., The Hebrew and Chaldee of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New; Class VI., Divinity, Logic, Rhetoric, and Moral Philosophy.

This ambitious course of study was quite beyond the range of Mr. White's scholarship, and pointed to a new leader to execute this broad but ill-digested scheme of study. Accordingly, Martin Ruter, pastor of St. George's Church in Philadelphia, a self-made man like Asbury and Lee,

was chosen president. He was a man who had devoted himself to extended lines of study. Mr. Ruter was a very popular and very influential pastor. His election was thought to be certain to be very advantageous to the school. It not only drew the attention of Mr. Ruter's personal friends, but also that of the church, to an institution until then comparatively unknown to the public. It did look like new life for the school to see eighty students enrolled the first day. Many had come from States outside New England, for the first time in the history of the institution, attracted by the fame of Ruter for learning and eloquence. And he deserved his fame. The first revival of religion visited the school soon after the new principal came. There was a great deal of talk about profound scholarship, high ideals were urged, and every man began to look as though he knew twice as much as he did know. Not even Theodore Parker in his palmiest days could swallow down a whole language and literature more expeditiously and crudely than they.

Mr. Ruter was a dreamer of dreams. Soon he hoped to create full-fledged preparatory schools, — a full-grown college, with law schools, theological schools, and medical schools. What has been the work of seventy years, he hoped to achieve in ten. Such plans were doomed to failure. As a teacher his success was only moderate, and that must have been a sore personal disappointment after his brilliant career in the pastorate. At the

General Conference of 1820, Dr. Ruter was elected book agent. The fact that he accepted this office shows that the sense of his own defects as an educator and of the visionary character of his dreams, had been brought home to him in his brief service at New Market. For with his intense conviction of the necessity of education and of educational institutions, Mr. Ruter would have had every motive for remaining in the educational work which moved Wilbur Fisk twice to decline a bishopric that he might devote his life to a higher work. Mr. Ruter was self-denying and unworldly enough to have clung to so noble a work, had not the conviction come over him that this high honor was held in reserve for another brow.

With Mr. Ruter's resignation vanished all the high hopes of many preparatory schools, a full-blown college, and professional schools. Discouragement set in, numbers fell off, and the trustees had only a plain little academy on their hands where poor Moses White and an assistant had been doing what little true educational work had been going on at New Market Academy. From that date deficits grew larger and students grew fewer, until the only way to keep things alive was to raise money in the churches. The finishing stroke was given when the conference refused to open the pulpits of that body to the agents of the Academy. Various expedients were resorted to in the vain hope of infusing fresh vigor into the school. The last two terms, but twenty students

were in attendance. Wilbur Fisk was asked to do something for the school, but refused to do so while the institution stayed at New Market.

To Wilbraham it was finally determined to remove the institution, notwithstanding efforts had been made in favor of Rochester, N. H., Lynn, Mass., and Ellington, Conn. The chief reasons urged for the removal were these: in the former location the school was surrounded by the best and largest schools in the country, while at Wilbraham it would find no near competitors, as this was long before the founding of the schools at Easthampton, Northfield, and South Hadley. As this was a school where both sexes were to be educated together, there was good reason for expecting a larger patronage from the vicinage than at New Market. It was hoped that the school at Wilbraham might be attended by students from the Middle States much more largely than would be the case at the former site.

In Sherman's "History of Wesleyan Academy" we read: —

"Rev. J. A. Merrill was the occasion of the selection of Wilbraham as the site of the Academy. As Presiding Elder of the New London District, in which Wilbraham was included, he was at the house of Rev. Calvin Brewer, a local preacher of the charge, in the summer or early autumn of 1823, in company with the Rev. Phineas Peck, who resided at Wilbraham and supplied the pulpit. Attention was drawn to the Academy at New Market, which led Mr. Merrill, himself a

trustee, to observe that the conference at its last session had taken action in favor of its removal to a locality adapted to secure a larger attendance of students. Mr. Brewer asked what he thought of Wilbraham. Mr. Merrill replied that he could say nothing officially, but if the inhabitants wished it, and would make the proper exertions for it, he thought the matter could be accomplished."

After the Wilbraham people had communicated with the New Market trustees, and learned their views through the Rev. Mr. Peck, things took a new start amongst them. They were greatly pleased with the prospect of a literary institution in their village; and arrangements were at once made to enlarge the amount of their subscriptions. To secure this desirable end, twelve subscription papers were prepared and put in circulation in the town and immediate vicinity by various hands. The chief solicitor, however, was the Rev. Calvin Brewer, who had begun the work prior to the action of the trustees in regard to location; but the work was taken up and nobly seconded by other parties interested in the success of the enterprise. On the twelve papers, as reported to the trustees in January, 1825, the round sum of $2,693 was pledged for the erection of the new building or buildings. This was thought to be a liberal sum, and was, in fact, much more than they at first anticipated obtaining. The people, though not always able to give large sums, were found quite ready to respond to this unusual call; and this was true

as well of many members of the Congregational Church as of those of the Methodist, evincing their deep interest in education, and the breadth of their charity in aiding a sect with which, in earlier years, they had not always maintained the pleasantest relations. Nor were the contributions confined to members or attendants of the churches; many added their mites who were connected with no church.

The Rev. John Lindsay, then a resident of Boston, had procured the passage of an act of incorporation for the new institution by the legislature of Massachusetts, which received the governor's approval, February 7, 1824. The first trustees were Amos Binney, Abel Bliss, Abraham Avery, Calvin Brewer, Enoch Mudge, Jr., Wilbur Fisk, Joshua Crowell, William Rice, and John Lindsay. The first meeting of the new board was held at Mr. Lindsay's house in Boston, February 19, 1824. Colonel Binney was made the first president and Abel Bliss the first secretary of the board of trustees.

Rev. John Lindsay, as financial agent, had raised $3,511.67; Rev. Wilbur Fisk had obtained $303; Rev. George Pickering $780; making, with the $1,000 received from the New Market trustees and $2,693 subscribed at Wilbraham, $8,287.67.

These subscriptions were far from what would have been needed to meet the expenses for erecting a suitable series of buildings; for a properly organized school would require a school building

proper, a boarding-house, a residence for the principal, besides two or three special structures for carrying out the plans of some of the trustees.

The local committee certainly did select the very best spot for the academy on all the long Wilbraham street, as anybody can see who surveys it with a critical eye. The first building is thus described by Dr. Sherman: —

"The Board decided to build of brick, sixty-five feet by thirty-five, two stories high, ten and twelve feet each high, divided into one large and two small rooms, one large hall, forty-one by thirty-five feet, and four drawing rooms, above, with two flights of stairs, the basement story to be eight feet deep with stairway at each end, for wood, with the necessary doors and windows. At a later date the committee were instructed to erect a suitable cupola, and to 'use their discretion' in grading the grounds about the new building."

It was intended to have the Academy building done, and ready for school operations in September, 1825; but this was not the case until November. Meanwhile they elected Wilbur Fisk Principal of the Academy, on the 28th of September 1825, with power to appoint such instructors as he may deem expedient, and that he be requested to give notice that the Academy will be opened for the reception of pupils on or before the first Monday in November next, and that he prepare a proper code of rules and regulations, and a proper course of studies to be pursued by the scholars, fix the price of quarterage, and the price of board

with the inhabitants, until the boarding-house is provided and opened, and that he write advising with the steward, and direct and provide the furniture necessary for the boarding-house.

It will be seen that there was not only a great deal of work to be done in connection with the establishment and organization of the new institution, but a large confidence in the executive ability of Mr. Fisk, since otherwise they would not have given him such unlimited control. This action shows that the board of trustees had not yet learned how to do its own work. But this reliance upon Mr. Fisk's discretion and practical skill gave him a chance to show his high ability in this untried field. On his advice, the trustees procured the services of Mr. Nathaniel Dunn, Jr., a graduate of Bowdoin College, as teacher. Mr. Dunn was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was anxious to enter the new institution. He had excellent testimonials both to his scholarship and character. He was to teach the classics and other branches. As Principal Fisk could not yet give his undivided attention to his duties at Wilbraham, the chief direction of the school would devolve upon Mr. Dunn until the ensuing session of the New England Conference, when the presiding eldership of the Vermont district could be transferred to other hands.

The trustees determined to signalize the opening day of the school by public exercises, whose chief feature should be an address by Principal

Fisk. Presiding Elder Fisk was so busy on his official rounds of duty that he could only spare Principal Fisk the odd moments which could be picked up while in a chaise on his journeys. Then Mrs. Fisk would officiate as driver, and her husband would turn his hat into a writing-desk for the penning down of his well-considered inaugural. What did he say? This: that the lecture-mongers, who pretended to teach some of the broadest and most diversified branches in a few fleeting hours, were simply a delusion and a snare. They gave their patrons only the vaguest and most superficial ideas of subjects which could be mastered only by diligent and protracted study. This part of the speech would not be without its striking applications to our own times.

In reply to the allegation that the method and system of the scholar in the distribution of time are artificial and ill-adapted to the contingent pursuits of life, he says: —

"The merchant has his regular mode of doing business, notwithstanding the variations of the market, and his different successes and losses. The mariner has his regular course, and his fixed system of making his calculations, and established rules by which he turns to the best possible advantage all the contrary winds and shifting currents in his voyage. Indeed, the changes and adversities to which he is subject make it the more necessary that he should proceed by rule. Without this he would be the sport of every wind, and be driven from his course by every current. So without system in the

voyage of life, the mind of man will be driven out of its course and away from its object by all the various changes of time. Instead, therefore, of excusing ourselves from a systematic employment of time, on the ground of the varieties of life, this should be the very motive to incite us to a close adherence to rule and method, that we may make the most of a short and changing life."

A somewhat detailed discussion of the relation of athletic sports to the health and happiness of students follows, setting forth their great importance to a well-rounded education. But even such things should be "guarded and regulated with care by the instructor; who, like a father, should watch over his charge, in season and out of season, regulating their recreations as well as their studies."

To the objection that education unfitted people for the practical duties of life, he made answer, "That the experience of our common schools convicted this plea of error. Such education as was there given fitted men for a better discharge of every-day duty. Why should not more education still produce the like effect on the same persons that it did before?"

Finally, the orator of the day approached the most serious difficulty of all, the alleged immorality and irreligion of the schools. There the student "Meets the filthy conversation of the wicked, and learns to blaspheme. He meets the debauchee, and learns incontinency; he meets the jovial companion, and indulges the social glass; he meets

with the caviling infidel, and learns to sneer at religion. In short, he leaves the university more learned, but frequently more corrupted, if not wholly ruined."

Is there any way to prevent this? Can we guard scholars with securities equal to those they enjoy at home? Doubtless we can. Nay, it is believed that a public seminary may be governed and regulated upon a plan such as will better guard the habits and morals of scholars than they are usually guarded in our common schools, where the children are a part of the time under the parental roof. They should be under the immediate control of the instructors, who will be able to guard their morals out of school as well as during hours of instruction.

"Not only should the pupil be guarded from exposure to temptation; but morality and religion should be made a part of his instruction. The youth sent from home to a literary institution usually has much less religious instruction than before. When in his father's house, in common with the rest of the family he enjoyed the means of grace and the pastoral services of the minister. Now, if he mingles in the congregation of the place, he goes as a stranger and returns as a stranger. Unless, therefore, he is taught morality and religion by his instructors, it may be said, no one cares for his soul. How important, then, that he should be taught these by those to whose immediate care his education is intrusted.

"By religious instruction is not meant teaching the peculiar tenets of a party. Literary institutions should

not be prostituted to the low purposes of proselytism. This would not be to make Christians, but bigots. But those leading principles of religion should be inculcated which are calculated to make the heart better; and those practical precepts which regulate the life. Nor should these be impressed on the young mind in an arbitrary and austere manner. The ground and propriety of what is enjoined should be explained. Our religion is a reasonable service, and this, its true character, should be exhibited to the young as soon as their reason begins to dawn; and in this way, through all the succeeding stages of religious instruction, should the requirements and sanctions of the divine government be illustrated until they commend themselves to the understanding and conscience."

After defining in this wise and catholic spirit the scope of the new academy, Mr. Fisk left the school in the hands of Mr. Dunn, while he returned to the duties of his presiding eldership of the Vermont district. The full term only lasted four weeks, and only seven students were present in all. During the winter term the attendance, drawn from the place and its vicinity, ran up to forty-four, while during the year one hundred and four students belonged to the school. Tuition was low: the charge for English studies was $3; for astronomy and higher mathematics, $3.50; for Latin and Greek, $4; for ornamental branches, $5. The price of board was $1.25 per week. We are again reminded of the three chief aims of the trustees, — first, to make their education good; second, to make it cheap; and third, to make it

religious. Here it might be thought that the second aim had been carried out so effectively as to render the first impossible. For a time, Wilbur Fisk only accepted the ordinary meagre salary of a Methodist preacher while performing the duties of his principalship, and a part of the time he acted as pastor of the local church, when he drew no pay from the funds of the academy. Mr. Dunn's salary was $400 a year and board. Yet these small salaries did not necessarily mean very great hardship. Fifteen years earlier (in 1810) Lyman Beecher asked the presbytery for a dismission from East Hampton, Long Island, on account of insufficient support. The presbytery wished Mr. Beecher to look the matter over, and report to them upon what sum he could properly support his family of seven persons. He replied that if all arrearages were once paid, he could live on $500 a year. Such things must be borne in mind in estimating the scale of prices at Wilbraham.

They had four terms a year, beginning on the first Monday of September, December, March, and June. There were six weeks of vacation in summer. Among the text-books used were Adams's Latin Grammar, Goodrich's Greek Grammar, Liber Primus and Jacob's Greek Reader, Stoughton's Virgil, Clark's Introduction to Making Latin, Blake's Natural Philosophy, Comstock's Chemistry, Day's Algebra, Blair's Rhetoric, Hedge's Logic, Ingersoll's English Gram-

mar, Walker's Dictionary, and Scott's Lessons for Reading.

Wilbur Fisk was appointed to the position of principal at Wilbraham at the Conference of 1826, and henceforth could give his undivided attention to that task. He removed his family to Wilbraham in May, 1826. This one work was, however, in reality a manifold one. He was everybody's adviser who had responsible connection with the work of the school. He filled his proper office of principal with painstaking fidelity and skill. This alone would have overtaxed the powers of an ordinary man. Colonel Binney was the only member of the board of trustees who had ever filled such an office. His skill and his money gifts made his services invaluable. But his residence was about a hundred miles away from Wilbraham, so that he could not be consulted, even if his private business would have yielded time, for guiding school affairs. Hence upon the new principal fell the full burden of planning the business to be presented to the board, getting it into the wisest shape for adoption, arguing the case so as to carry the body with him, and then executing the work assigned him with such tact and spirit as to compel approval. He always had the unflagging assistance of the board of trustees in all his work. Gradually he trained them to perform their duties with such spirit and self-devotion that when he ceased to be active in their affairs, their courage and wisdom and generosity constantly opened the way to a higher usefulness for the honored academy.

The steward was as new to his duties as the other officers of the institution. Mr. Fisk was very careful in the selection of the best persons within reach for all such positions, and then he was accessible to them at all times when a word of counsel, of direction, or of encouragement was wanted. He was so fully convinced that the supreme test of any school was the quality of the instruction imparted that he took every possible safeguard to procure the best possible instruction. He was fortunate in securing, in most cases, very competent persons for this work. He corresponded with Stephen Olin, then a rising young man in the church, and afterward Dr. Fisk's most eminent successor at Middletown. Had not Mr. Olin been under engagement, he would have begun his teaching at Wilbraham. Mr. Dunn, the first classical teacher at Wilbraham, was from the start a very successful instructor. He gave the most of his life to teaching, and always justified the high reputation he gained at Wilbraham. The first preceptress, in charge of the girl's department, was Miss Caroline Tillinghast, of Providence, R. I. She was a lady of very superior-education, quiet and refined manners, of a profoundly religious temper, whose graces had been exercised and developed by a remarkably diversified career. She evidently had

> "A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathize."

Mr. Fisk not only took indefatigable pains to obtain the most competent men for teachers, but

he had the most remarkable skill for getting out of every man his best work. This was partly the natural effect of his own example. Nobody could be more unwearied than he in his endeavors to do his very best. Whether he was preaching a sermon, hearing a class, advising a teacher, student, or the steward, his whole heart and soul went into the work on hand. Such an example in a principal is contagious, and sure to breed a like spirit in others. How much pains he would sometimes take is shown in the following incident narrated by Dr. Holdich: —

"At a certain time when the school was in need of an additional teacher, and one just suited could not be found, he selected a young minister, but indifferently qualified, and that he might appear before his classes with credit regularly heard him, in his own hours of relaxation, through every lesson." [1]

Then he breathed an atmosphere of hopefulness about him wherever he went. This was partly the natural fruit of his temperament, but not wholly so. His friends in college days, like Gould and Taft, agree that there was always a vein of sadness and melancholy about his mind; and Fisk himself says that these characteristics did not leave him wholly and forever until that notable blessing at the Wellfleet camp-meeting. Then Giant Despair and he parted forever. But no matter when or how he won it, he had a heart of sunshine in him, and a hopeful face always.

[1] *Life of Wilbur Fisk*, p. 180.

"His summer" did "last all the year."

Such undecaying hopefulness of temper made it easy for others to work with him and enjoy the most difficult work. For surely this Methodist parson-saint could say as Tennyson's Sir Galahad

"My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure."

It would be comparatively easy for a person like Mr. Fisk to govern a large school such as Wilbraham Academy soon grew to be under the new auspices. The basis of all good government in such a school must be respect for the regulations of the school and a deferential obedience to the officers thereof. In Mr. Fisk's time there was no lack of the usual arrangements for good and even strict discipline. For the more difficult cases they had a prison, and for the worst, the utterly incorrigible, there was a dungeon. The prison was a room furnished only with a hard bed, a single chair, and a naked table; the dungeon was a room with clean straw scattered over the floor. The fare of these prisoners was not such as to tempt them to intemperance. A brief seclusion in these cheerless rooms usually broke the resolution of the most rebellious. On some occasions public whipping was resorted to. This whipping was, as Arnold of Rugby would always have it, severe enough to do its work effectually. At Wilbraham, it was rather the publicity than the severity of the castigation that was found effectual. Wilbur Fisk usually inflicted these whippings himself; for his sincere

kindness and strict self-control made it safer not to intrust such disagreeable duties to subordinates. Hence he sometimes found himself in circumstances where it required all his coolness to face successfully a ridiculous situation. Once, when his patience had been tried beyond all endurance, he told the offender to be ready for a whipping after prayers the next morning. The victim prepared himself accordingly, and the first blows of the rattan fell ineffectually upon the student's shoulders. Then the principal ordered the removal of the overcoat. A smaller overcoat was found under the first. That, too, was ordered off. Then the whipping was resumed, to no purpose, for the crafty youngster had concealed under his waistcoat a thick pasteboard atlas, on which the blows rained harmlessly. "What on earth did you get yourself up that way for?" asked the smiling master. "You told me to come prepared for a whipping, sir, and I thought I had better." By this time the school was in a roar, and the whipping was very brief.

However, punishment was not often resorted to in the school management. Mr. Fisk was a manly man, and he aroused a like spirit in others, and his bearing tended to call out manliness in students. His appeals were always addressed to the nobler side of the young people. He sought always to get them to recognize the principles of self-respect, high-mindedness, and personal honor in their relations to each other and the authorities

of the school. All his influence was thrown powerfully against those practices by which students are encouraged in loose and low views of their duties to each other. That was before the days of the temperance reformation, so that one of the things against which he had constantly to guard was the opening of places where wine, beer, and ardent spirits could be purchased. Under such a state of things any school principal who keeps his eyes open to what men are doing around him, and who can command the respect and assistance of the town opinion, becomes a wall of defense to his school. This, Mr. Fisk rarely failed to do and to be. To one hardened offender, whose avarice had tempted him to induce certain students to run up forbidden and unreasonable bills at his store, he wrote, "Sir, I never shall pay such bills, and the parents will never pay them if I can hinder it."

One of the peculiar features of Wilbraham school-life was the "Social Interview." As the school was made up of young people of both sexes, Mr. Fisk thought it desirable that they should be trained to social life under wisely regulated principles. Hence all the officers of the school used to meet with all the students in a large room. Here, after tea had been served, they were expected to engage in conversation on whatever topics they pleased; though devices were resorted to from time to time to prevent the same persons from monopolizing each other's company. The object

of the Interview was to break up shyness and self-absorption, and induce easy and refined manners in social life.

One point of great practical importance in the plans was the securing good and cheap board. It was thought that for a while board might be obtained in the families of the village at such low rates as to protect the interests of the students. Such families as had boarders entered into an agreement not to charge more than $1.25 a week for it. But it was obvious to all that this resource could not safely be depended upon. The place was not a large one, so that trouble might easily arise either by some families asking too high a rate, or by some declining to offer board at all. In either case there would have been perplexity. Should the school increase according to the hopes of its founders, there would some time be hundreds in attendance. Then it was thought that the gathering of a large number of students of both sexes in one large boarding hall, under the direction of the steward and teachers, would tend in many ways to the development of a unified school-life and the production of a home atmosphere. Hence the trustees purchased Warriner's Hotel of its owners, directly across the road from the school-buildings. In this way, after the hotel had been considerably remodeled and enlarged, they were always able to afford astonishingly cheap rates of board in view of its quality; so that when three hundred and fifty students resorted to the school, board was as good

and cheap as ever. The large dining-room afterwards became the scene of the week-day prayer-meeetings, over which the principal always presided, and where many a soul was won to Christ.

At a later date the trustees built a house for the use of the principal, and a plain structure for the use of students interested in the mechanic-arts department. After a while the boarding-house proved too strait to accommodate all the students who desired entertainment there, and so it became needful to enlarge it and to make the most of all the room they had. Such an advance in numbers of necessity compelled the employment of more teachers. William Magoun, an alumnus of Brown University, was associated with Mr. Dunn in the work of instruction. At times the services of Joel Knight and of David Patten, Jr., were secured for some of the more elementary branches of study. When the first preceptress, Miss Charlotte L. Tillinghast, gave up her duties, in consequence of her marriage to her associate in teaching, Mr. Dunn, the position was taken by Miss Susan Brewer, a sister of the Rev. Calvin Brewer of Wilbraham, a lady of high character and various accomplishments. These names complete the roll of the members of the academy faculty in Dr. Fisk's day.

Somewhat perplexing to the trustees was this remarkable growth of their institution in numbers and popularity. For they were compelled to respond to these indications of prosperity by a bold and liberal policy. With them it was the day of

financial small things; one man, Colonel Binney, gave $10,000; but the next largest gift was $175 by Abel Bliss, and from $150, the next largest subscription, the gifts ran all the way down to ten cents. The chief collector was the Rev. John Lindsay, and at times Wilbur Fisk and Rev. George Pickering also acted as collectors. The conference passed resolutions opening every pulpit within their bounds to the agents of the trustees, and sometimes they appointed special collectors besides. The ministers preached sermons on the subject. They circulated subscription papers intended to reach all their people, high and low, rich and poor; not a child was unsolicited. Gifts from without were welcome, and sometimes such outside gifts enabled the principal to make a very effective appeal to the careless or niggardly in the Methodist congregations, as we see from his article in "Zion's Herald": —

ERA OF GOOD FEELING.

"A circumstance occurred, during a late tour in Vermont and New Hampshire to solicit donations for Wesleyan Academy, which I deem worthy of public notice. I had a letter of introduction to Colonel B. of Hanover (Dartmouth College), N. H.; and as I hardly supposed the people of that villlage would be disposed to do much towards the object of my mission, I had designed to call on the colonel, and then go on my journey. In conversation with the Rev. William W., Congregational minister in N., I mentioned my design, and he suggested the propriety of my calling upon other citizens in

Hanover, and especially upon the officers of the college, and kindly offered to be my company, and introduce me to such gentlemen as he thought would be favorable to my object. This was accordingly agreed upon, and in the course of a few hours, the next day, we received subscriptions in that small village to the amount of *seventy-five dollars*. Most of the officers of the college, including the president, became subscribers, and seemed to wish success to the institution. The donations themselves were not more gratifying than the spirit in which they were given. No captious questions were asked, no long complaints were made by those who gave; though complaints might have been made with propriety at that time, if ever, by the good people of Hanover. They had but a little before completed a fund of $10,000 for their own college, of which a generous part had been subscribed in that village, and but just before about $1,000 had been collected in that place for a religious charity by Mr. C. of S., and, in addition, they had just undertaken to raise a fund of $50,000 for their own college, $5,000 of which had been subscribed, or would be subscribed, in Hanover. In the midst of this almost unparalleled levy of public benevolences, they gave $75 to an institution one hundred and thirty miles from them, under the patronage of another denomination, and of which, until that day, they had probably had but little knowledge.

"I call this at least one good proof that the present is an *era of good feeling*. When men of different denominations and of different local interests in literary seminaries unite their *valuable* efforts with the men of other denominations and other local interests to aid the common cause of religion and of science, we may expect

such a *holy alliance* will drive sin and error from the field: an alliance this, which can only exist among men of enlarged and noble minds.

"Another reflection grows out of the above facts, viz.: that men are not the less willing to give because they are often solicited and have been in the habit of giving. As in Hanover, so I believe it will be found in other places, that where the objects for public charity are the oftenest presented, there their importance is most considered, and the duty of giving is best understood. The yoke of benevolent duties, where it is taken and *worn*, is easy, and the burden thereof becomes light. It is the man who seldom gives that chafes and complains most when requested to give. It has been intimated by some of our ministerial brethren that, unless we cease our public and private solicitations for charity, we shall sour our people, and drive them from us. This, however, I believe, is a mistake. If we are careful to solicit only for worthy objects, and if we prudently expend the public charities intrusted to us, we need not fear. We have been too fearful of calling upon our people to aid in the great works of benevolence of the present day, and this is why we are so doubtful of their willingness to give. Are Methodist Christians different from other Christians in their dispositions and feelings? If they are, Methodism has made them to differ, for it has selected its adherents from the same mass of population with the other denominations. Are we prepared to acknowledge that that modification of Christianity which maintains a universal atonement, and offers a free salvation to the whole human family, has a tendency to lock up the soul of him who believes it within the narrow walls of self? Shall those who believe in perfect love to God and man, in com-

plete deadness to the world, in the entire subjugation of the unholy and earthly passions, be accounted less accessible to the pleas of benevolence and to the claims of charity than other Christians? It cannot be. Methodism is a benevolent religion. It makes high professions of consistency, as well as of that charity which 'seeketh not its own.' Frequent appeals for laudable charities to men under the influence of such a religion cannot drive them from us, but draw them to us by the strongest cords of attachment. We may, indeed, irritate the feelings of those who have connected themselves with us, not because they have any peculiar attachment for us, but because they think ours a *cheap religion*, and that they can live with us without paying for it. Such men ought to be disturbed. They have hung upon us like dead weights, and been sponging around our ecclesiastical gates long enough. If they will not reform, it is no matter how soon they leave us, and it is to be hoped no one else will receive them. The least we ought to do to such narrow, covetous minds is to make them uneasy everywhere. Such souls will never be admitted to the heavenly feast in their present state, for there will not be found a wedding-garment in the vestry of heaven to fit them — they are all too large; and they ought to have no seat at the table of the church below. But, thank God, the great body of the Methodists are not such. If they are deficient in their public charities, it is chiefly because their attention has not been often enough called to these subjects, and their importance and necessity have not been sufficiently set before them.

"But I will close this article by adding that the seminary at Wilbraham, for which the above-mentioned subscriptions were received, will succeed and prosper,

unless its more immediate patrons are greatly wanting to themselves. With the best wishes of other denominations, and even with their pecuniary aid in its favor; with a large and increasing number of students and a prosperous beginning, all that is now wanted is a united effort at this time to relieve it of its present embarrassments, and a steady perseverance in its support. But if a few be left to groan and toil under the burden till they faint and give over, it shall be to our shame and confusion, if not to our overthrow. Let us, then, urged on by the good example and encouraging aid of others, show by *our works* that we are what we profess to be, the supporters of a liberal and enlightened system of truth. W. FISK.

"WILBRAHAM, *March* 27, 1827."

Let us look at the religious side of life at the Wesleyan Academy. The students were required to attend morning and evening prayers in the school, and attendance at one of the village churches was expected on Sundays. If a student were disposed, he might attend the Tuesday evening sermon or lecture in the dining-hall; there was a general prayer-meeting on Thursday evening, and a religious class-meeting to which those needing religious counsel and direction could resort. Attendance on these week-day meetings was strictly voluntary. In Dr. Fisk's day the Tuesday evening lecture or sermon was well attended; for the principal used to discourse upon some theme announced beforehand, so that those who liked might study the topic for themselves. These discourses were so

impressive that the seats were usually all full. Dr. Fisk was very urgent that these regular means of grace should be so spiritual that believers might steadily grow in grace, and sinners be turned to the wisdom of the just. So fully was he sustained in these sound views by the efforts of his faithful associates that no entire term ever went past without some conversions, and thus the tone of the school was always religious. But he was also convinced that such schools ought to be, even more frequently than ordinary churches, scenes of religious revival.

On the 7th of June, directly after Mr. Fisk had gone to Wilbraham, the New England Conference held its annual session in that place. Bishop George was the presiding bishop, a man of the most devout piety, and a preacher of fervid and melting eloquence. As the official and formal business in those times was not so extensive as now, it was the custom to devote no small part of the session to religious, and even revival, services. Nothing suited them better than to leave a blaze of revival influences behind them. There were revivalists of no mean power in the body itself. Such were Jotham Horton, Orange Scott, Abraham D. Merrill, Leroy Sunderland, and Wilbur Fisk himself. Above all these eminently successful revivalists towered the fame of John Newland Maffitt. Maffitt took the front rank among such honored names as easily and undeniably as Mr. Moody would do in our time. I remember ex-

pressing my doubts to the Rev. Ralph W. Allen, of the New England Conference, of the justice of Maffitt's fame. Instantly his face lit up: "Well, then, you never heard him preach. Nobody who ever heard him preach could doubt that." Still that did happen sometimes, for I remember the late Mr. James T. Fields of Boston gave me a most vivid description of the effect of Maffitt's preaching on him when a boy. "But," said Mr. Fields, "I was a boy then. I wonder how it would seem if I could hear him now." Ex-Governor Claflin of Massachusetts once gave the best grounded and argued statement of Maffitt's superiority to all subsequent and recent revivalists, like Moody and Pentecost, I have ever heard. He had certain external points of distinction over them which gave a charm to everything he said. He was a handsome, well-formed man, of dignified bearing, dressed with exquisite taste and naturalness. His elocution was exceedingly easy and refined, and his enunciation of words whose pronunciation is disputed always followed the best authorities. Yet, unlike many, all these matters of petty distinction were so thoroughly spontaneous to him that they seemed to operate of themselves, with the easy gracefulness of a bird's pinions. Then came the more important matter. His preaching was thoroughly orthodox. He preached all the great doctrines of the gospel with unsparing earnestness and devotion. He had a study where he used to pass the intervals between one

service and another. There he used to employ all his time and thought in preparation for the next service. He made out his points in a clear and convincing manner from the express teachings of Scripture or the experience of holy men. Much of his time was spent in prayer, so that he carried with him that heavenly influence which sways all hearts.

This was the revivalist, just then in the full flush of his power, whose participation in the proceedings of the conference, and whose preaching during and after the session, rendered the coming of the first great revival in the academy a marked and memorable event. After the conference closed, Maffitt was induced to remain to take advantage of the general interest in religion which had been aroused. His preaching was made instrumental in extending and deepening the work of grace through the school and throughout the town.

Maffitt showed his unusual readiness of retort. Somebody asked, "Brother Maffitt, why do you always say wĭnd in reading your hymns?" Like a flash came the answer, "Because I cannot fīnd it in my mĭnd to say wĭnd." In this revival at Wilbraham the Congregationalist pastor complained that there was too much noise. "My brother, this is the stillest world you will ever be in," was the quick and genial reply of the great evangelist. Dr. Fisk sent an account of the revival to "Zion's Herald."

REVIVAL AT THE WESLEYAN ACADEMY.

"WILBRAHAM, *July* 7, 1826.

"DEAR BROTHER, — Through the columns of the 'Herald' we would give a short notice of the prosperity of our rising seminary, and of the dealings of God with us in this place. The students are generally well-behaved, diligent, and easily governed. This is undoubtedly in part owing to that which rejoices us more than anything else — a revival of religion among us. There were several instances of conversion and some good symptoms of a work of grace among the people previously to the sitting of the conference in this place; but now a number profess to have found forgiveness through Christ, and numbers more are inquiring after salvation, insomuch that present appearances indicate a general shower of divine mercy, not only in this parish, but in the South parish and in other neighboring parishes. The labors of our brethren during the conference have doubtless contributed to this; and the work has been especially forwarded, under God, by the instrumentality of Brother Maffitt, who tarried more than a fortnight after the conference rose, and labored with much success among the people. Of this work our interesting family at the boarding house have shared a good proportion. I will not name the number who have professed to experience justifying grace, because among such young persons, in times of great excitement, there cannot always be a strong assurance that the work will in every case prove genuine. A number, however, give good evidence of a change of heart; and I know some of our preachers will rejoice when they learn that some of their children are among the number. I cannot express the feelings of my heart when I returned from a journey

which I took immediately after conference, to find that a number of these dear youths who have been intrusted to our care are rejoicing in the Lord. We rejoice over them, however, with trembling; we shall watch for their confirmation in the Divine life with affectionate anxiety; and constantly pray, 'O Lord, strengthen what thou hast wrought for us!' Oh, that all our brethren would join with us in this prayer! We are the more encouraged to hope the work will prove permanent, because a number of the scholars were confirmed in experience before they came here, whose example and conversation are very helpful to the converts. W. Fisk."

Lyman Beecher says that usually he had premonitions in his own spiritual condition or in his work as a pastor of the advent of his revivals, but that one revival of great power broke out in his church without any heralding sign whatever. Thus was it with the coming of the greatest revival of religion ever known at Wesleyan Academy in Dr. Fisk's day. At such seasons an unwonted efficiency is given to the ordinary means of grace by the direct influence of the Spirit of God. We have seen how anxious Mr. Fisk had all along been not only that the divine blessing might attend all the religious instruction and admonition given there, so that the devout might rise to a higher type of devotion and sinners be won from their waywardness by godly Christian example, but also special seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord might be vouchsafed the school. His feeling was profound that such wide-

spread awakenings ought to be not only feasible, but more feasible in such Christian schools than elsewhere; that a revival amongst such excellent young people would redound far more widely to the glory of God than an ordinary awakening could; and that such school revivals would arouse more sympathy for the work of Christian education in the church than anything else. That was an era of widespread revivals in the American churches, so that their occurrence would be promptly noted and widely reported. Hence the ardor and persistence of Dr. Fisk's labors to secure a revival year by year. We quote Rev. Stephen Cushing's account of the result.

"On the morning of that ever memorable day, (March 9th, 1828), a young man of sixteen said to another whom he chanced to meet, 'Edward, will you seek religion, if I will?' 'I desire to think of it, and will give you an answer in an hour,' was the reply. At the expiration of the hour he consented to join him. They walked together to church and in the evening another joined them in a prayer-meeting. Together they frequently read the Bible and prayed until Wednesday evening, when, after a sermon by Dr. Fisk on the text 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,' they with one more rose for prayers, signifying that they intended to make religion the business of life. A prayer-meeting in the students' room followed, and at a late hour three of the number were converted.

"The next evening they all testified at the usual family prayer-meeting that they had found the Saviour, and six others desired prayers, most of whom were before

midnight rejoicing in the forgiveness of their sins. Through the next day and evening there were many small prayer-meetings. On Saturday the school exercises were suspended and the time devoted to prayer and Christian conference. During the week as many as thirty had been converted. At the close of the second week but five remained in the boarding-house unconverted. Meantime between fifty and sixty had given their hearts to God, and of these six became ministers. Osmon C. Baker, David Patten, and Morris Hill were of the number. . . .

"One incident I well remember. A backslider, afterwards a well-known and beloved teacher in the institution (William G. Mitchell), was concerned for his soul and sought a retired place for prayer. Entering a room in the boarding-house, he knelt and began to pray in earnest. Another student coming to his room saw him, and called in two others to pray with him. Unaware of their presence the seeker prayed aloud, and as he ceased another prayed for him, when he suddenly fell to the floor and remained apparently unconscious for nearly an hour. On reviving, his joy was unspeakable and full of glory.

"At class-meeting in the evening, as J. B. Merwin, now a Presiding Elder in the New York Conference, arose and expressed a desire to be a Christian, Mitchell seized Merwin, a large and strongly built man, and carried him the length of the boarding-hall to Dr. Fisk, and asked him to pray for the seeker. For weeks the joy of young Mitchell continued full and overflowing. . . .

"One characteristic of this revival was the prominence given to the subject of sanctification or Christian perfection as the duty and privilege of all believers.

Were this more frequently done, the results of revivals would be far more satisfactory. In this instance the converts were urged to go on to perfection, and to devote themselves fully to God. In a short time after his conversion Baker [afterwards Bishop Baker] professed entire sanctification, and exhibited the spirit of it in all his after life. Other converts profited by these exhortations, and many of them soon received this fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

On this account, Dr. Sherman, who knows the religious history of Wesleyan Academy by heart, comments: —

"Among the many revivals which have gladdened the student life at Wilbraham, none has equaled in depth, and power, and ascertained results, that of 1828. During its progress, Dr. Fisk remarked that he had never before seen the power of God so marvelously displayed in the conversion of souls. The work began without observation, and apparently without human instrumentality, and, once under way, the flow of the stream was quick, steady, broad, and deep. It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in the eyes of all who witnessed it. By this surprising uplift, nearly all the members of the school were brought into the Kingdom of God. So overpowering was the movement that for an entire week the usual duties of the school were put aside, and the attention of students and citizens was given to the subject of personal religion."

Three young men, who intended to enter the ministry, had associated themselves together in 1827, partly for united study in theology, and partly for

gaining information as to the best lines of study for young ministers and the best books to help them in their work. These men were Charles Adams, John W. Merrill, and Edward Otheman. They were soon joined by Selah Stocking, Joel Knight, Horace Moulton, Jefferson Hascall, Jefferson Hamilton, and others. They appointed a committee to ask the suggestions of Dr. Fisk, and found, to their delight, that they had anticipated him in a favorite plan for the advantage of the school. Under these delightful auspices the class soon rose to thirty members. Henceforth Mr. Fisk met the class on an appointed evening every week. This arrangement was very helpful to its members, but the enthusiastic writer who calls such a weekly meeting with Wilbur Fisk a "a theological education" is wide astray. A former member of the class, Rev. John W. Merrill, D. D., of Concord, N. H., has kindly furnished notes of this famous class: —

"We then thought no one could take the lead of it so well as our revered principal. It was doubtful, with his feeble health, with his many cares, whether he could assume this new work; yet we could think of no one else so genial, so competent. We imparted our plan and our wishes to Dr. Fisk, who with a radiance of joy on his face not only consented to be our president, but expressed his conviction that it was a providential event. . . . He appointed one evening a week to sit with us as our teacher, critic, director, and president. These appointments, when in town, he uniformly kept; and at our meetings

he would fervently pray for us that we might be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and prepared for our great work. With what fervor he poured out his soul for us, those only can know who have seen and heard him.

"At these meetings he would give out some of the principles of constructing sermons, assign us our texts, or let us choose them. At the next meeting we would present our plans. He would show wherein they were faulty, and note what was most happy with singular aptness. Hard questions in theology he would often propose for us to think of and then discuss. Topics in theology were given us on which we were expected to write. He would look these productions over, and at the next time give the suggestions needed. His conversations at these times were feasts to our hungry souls. Clerical visitors were often invited to spend the evening with us, and never was the face of Wilbur Fisk more radiant than when, like the Master, he sat with his disciples. Under Christ he was our Master, a master-spirit."

Of course, this was no small addition to the cares of an overtasked man; but notice "the radiance of joy on his face" with which Wilbur Fisk confronts this burden of unremunerated labor. With such a heavenly glow from the Sun of Righteousness on his face, one is surely safe in concluding that the sanctification he won at Wellfleet camp-meeting was still a living possession.

While the academy was thus making its way into public confidence and favor by its high standards in all the ordinary branches taught in such institutions, certain members of the board of trust

showed a restless eagerness to connect with it experiments in the manual labor line. A building was erected where, it was thought, instruction might be given in chair-making or shoe-making to any who might be disposed to devote to these occupations the time usually spent in diversion and conversation. But somehow the zeal for such experiments seems to have flamed more hotly and perseveringly in the wishes of some of the trustees than anywhere else. For several years they kept at it, passing resolutions, appointing committees to carry out their ideas, and turning from one project to another with singular zeal. Yet there was always some hitch about the business at the last moment, and real instruction in these mechanic arts was never given, so that the hopes of such things gradually showed their visionary and impracticable character. Once they set up a country store to be run under the charge of a committee of the board. It is pretty evident that the fundamental trouble in all such experiments is, that a full tale of regular and systematic intellectual labor is a sufficient tax upon the physical endurance of ordinary men. Only now and then a person of exceptional physical vigor can take up this double task long without breaking down. The attitude of the teachers, including Dr. Fisk, toward these experimental manias is not clear. Apparently matters were in such a condition in the trustee board that they saw nothing else to be done but to expose such dreams by earnest attempts to realize them.

There was only one kind of experiment in manual labor which any large number of students took any interest in, — the attempt at a sort of coöperative or communistic farming. Farming is a pursuit with which quite a number of young men in any large school in New England are pretty sure to have some practical acquaintance. Hence it would be easy to make them take an interest in learning to be scientific agriculturists, and so putting the old folks at home to the blush over their inferior methods of farm management. If actual farm boys would be the last to be persuaded that a man can be at the same time a successful student and a successful farmer, still many of them might be tempted into making the experiment. Hence the agricultural craze was once widespread in the school at Wilbraham. Mr. Dunn tells the story : —

" The trustees braced themselves up for the occasion, and decided to try a larger experiment at amateur farming. Accordingly the large field back of the boarding-house was put into prime order for the production of crops ; and a good number of students took plots to cultivate during the season. The several lots were staked off, and a shallow trench dug between them as a clear distinction between *meum* and *tuum*. In due time the seed was committed to the bosom of Mother Earth ; and with the requisite skill, the hills or drills, as the case might be, were nicely patted down with the hoe. So far all was well. That was a sample of student planting. Who, after that, could doubt that stu-

dents could work at farming as well as write poor Latin and Greek, or run through idioms, or master mathematics? Please examine the field; note each plot containing the seed awaiting sun and rain and the willing hand of toil, to yield a return of a hundred-fold. The blade soon appears and affords early promise of a future and abundant harvest. The workmen are on the spot with rake, hoe, trowel, to cultivate the soil. At first the enthusiam was too great to be expressed with pen and ink. It was a furor for agriculture, resembling that at a later date for the *morus mulicaulis*. But such intensity of interest never continues long at white heat. Even love at too high a temperature is subject to decline. And so the fervor of our young men for geoponics lessened with each day. Each week their visits to this Eldorado became less frequent, until the steward made complaint to Dr. Fisk that something must be done to stir the amateur agriculturists to greater zeal and constancy in the performance of their duties. He gave me an invitation to walk out with him and view the Promised Land. We went, we saw. We saw weeds of the most approved kinds and the most luxuriant growth. The soil was rich and productive, — indeed, too much so to allow any chance for the grain. The doctor smiled and looked wisely over the profuse growth. I need not say that this was the last experiment at student farming at Wesleyan Academy."

Such was the career of successful educational work on which Wesleyan Academy was launched under the auspicious care of Wilbur Fisk. The managers had learned in the remorseless school of experience what parts of their plans were really

valuable, and responded to public necessities. The school at Wilbraham, and in a lesser degree that at Kent's Hill, Maine, became models on which other schools in New England and all over the country were planned. We shall be able to see the work done and the change wrought by these schools if we present a statistical exhibit of the Methodist schools which are now doing the kind of work in New England done by Wilbraham Academy in Dr. Fisk's day. All these schools, except that at Auburndale, educate the two sexes together. They have done an immense and priceless work in making education good, cheap, and religious. They have made Methodism honorable in the eyes of all their students. These statistics are from official sources. It is not until the tabular statement given hereafter is read that we can realize how truly the conference schools founded first under Wilbur Fisk at Wilbraham responded to a widely felt need. For the sake of clearnesss and definite impression, we limit our statistics to New England, though the movement has spread through the entire Methodist Episcopal Church. It will be seen that such schools are only at the beginning of their career of usefulness.

There are eight such schools to-day, served by ninety-nine teachers, with 1,715 students in attendance, whose endowments and other property of all sorts amount to $1,000,000, whose yearly income from all sources is $90,190, while but one school has a debt of $12,500. No less than 85,203 different

persons have been members of these schools. This last statement rests in part on estimates. Where estimates differ, the mean estimate between highest and lowest has been followed: —

NAME.	GRADE.	LOCATION.
1. East Greenwich Academy	Academic	East Greenwich, R. I.
2. New Hampshire Conference Seminary and Female College	Shown by name .	Tilton, N. H.
3. Vermont Methodist Seminary and Female College	Shown by name.	Montpelier, Vt.
4. Troy Conference Academy	Academic	Poultney, Vt.
5. Maine Wesleyan Seminary and Female College	Shown by name .	Kent's Hill, Me.
6. East Maine Conference Seminary	Academic and college preparatory	Bucksport, Me.
7. Wesleyan Academy		Wilbraham, Mass.
8. Lasell Seminary for Young Women	Shown by name .	Auburndale, Mass.

PRINCIPAL.	NUMBER OF TEACHERS.	WHEN FOUNDED.	STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE.	WHOLE NUMBER OF STUDENTS.	ENDOWMENT.
1. Rev. F. D. Blakeslee, M. A.	12	1841*	211	6,875	$30,000
2. D. C. Knowles, D. D. . . .	8	1843	209	7,000	48,000
3. Rev. E. A. Bishop, M. A. .	10	1834	215	14,000	40,000
4. Rev. E. H. Dunton, D. D. .	11	1836	199	5,500	30,000
5. E. M. Smith, D. D.	15	1821	220	25,000	111.000
6. Rev. A. F. Chase, A. M., Ph. D.		1850	180	10,828	25,000
7. Rev. G. M. Steele, LL. D. .	13	1824	230	16,000	14,000
8. C. C. Bragdon, A. M. . . .	30	1851	151		

* Bought in.

	VALUE OF BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, ETC.	VOLUMES IN LIBRARY.	VALUE OF APPARATUS.	CABINET SPECIMENS.	INCOME FROM TUITION.	INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES.	DEBT.
1.	$70,000	2,000	$1,000	1,050	$6,176.19	$1,184.75	
2.	75,000	600	500	2,500	3,500.00	2,000.00	
3.	80,000	1,400	125	2,000	8,500.00	3,000.00	
4.	50,000	1,800	600	1,500	7,728.54	14,000.00	
5.	121,000	5,500	5,000	2,500	6,036.70	3,314.24	
6.	30,000	1,300					
7.	160,000	5,000	3,200	2,000	12,750.00	8,000.00	
8.	115,000	1,300	2,000	750	13,000.00		$12,500

CHAPTER VI.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES.

BESIDES his addresses and articles upon educational subjects, Dr. Fisk was the author of two sermons on the errors of Universalism. The first was the sermon delivered before the New England conference during its session at Providence in 1823, and published at the joint request of the conference and the students of Brown University; the second was a sermon delivered in the Methodist Church at Springfield, Mass., and published in a little volume, "Anti-Universalism," of which Dr. Fisk and Rev. T. Merritt were the authors. The first sermon was arraigned by a Universalist clergyman at Providence, Pickering by name. The second was answered by Mr. Paige, a Springfield Universalist minister. It has been impossible to find in print the Universalist share in this controversy; and although Dr. Fisk was honor itself in the statement of an adversary's views, it would, perhaps, be better to pass this debate by with the general remark that Dr. Fisk shows here his wonted keenness of argument.

Under the signature, "A Friend of Mankind," Mr. Fisk published, in "Zion's Herald," "Stric-

tures on a Unitarian Tract, by Rev. John Pierpont, entitled 'Jesus Christ not a Literal Sacrifice,' printed for the American Unitarian Association." These "Strictures" were reprinted without date, and widely circulated in tract form. This has all the qualities of a good tract; it is brief, pointed, logical, sprightly, never rails, or misses the point. It probably served its author's purpose in its own day. Unlike his other controversial papers, it called out no reply.

The most important as well as most considerable of these controversial papers is still known to readers as the "Calvinistic Controversy." This book is important, because it shows the reasons which determined the ecclesiastical relations and the theological system of Dr. Fisk. Here are the motives which retained him in the Methodist Episcopal Church, notwithstanding the reasonings by which David Gould would have won him for the Congregational Church, and led him to reject even the mitigated Calvinism of the Protestant Episcopal Church, which his friend Taft, and especially Simon Wright, commended to his acceptance by every conceivable plea. It will be needless to more than epitomize Dr. Fisk's views in the various phases of the debate, since he had the single aim to show the essence and results of Calvinism, without impeaching anybody's motives, or pretending that any or all Calvinists admitted the logical consequences which he arrayed against their system. He never confounded his inferences with their beliefs.

The small town of Greenwich, Mass., was mainly made up of Calvinists and Methodists, and Dr. Fisk had preached with his usual acceptability to both parties. He was requested by both sides to preach on the points in dispute between Calvinists and Arminians. The sermon was so effective that some of his hearers renounced their former views. A committee of Greenwich people requested him to publish it. It went through two editions without making much stir, but when it was stereotyped, and issued from the book room as a tract, attacks began from various quarters. To these attacks Dr. Fisk replied, and so the book grew to its present shape in about 1835. It is still on sale at the book-room. I have thought best merely to epitomize the book because the latter portions are replies to the criticisms of the Rev. Dr. Fitch, of the New Haven Divinity School, the Rev. David Metcalf, and others. Mr. David Metcalf was, in his old age, my neighbor when I was pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Oxford, Mass. He gave me the first copy of President Fisk's "Calvinistic Controversy" I ever saw. I read it with care, and as Mr. Metcalf was fond of discussion, we debated it point by point. The book itself is black with my old friend's annotations. He retained a profound respect for Dr. Fisk, notwithstanding their keen discussions.

The text of Dr. Fisk's discourse was: —

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." — EPHESIANS, i. 4, 5.

"The ground of controversy is the unlimited extent to which some have carried the idea of predestination. Calvin says, 'Every action and motion of every creature is governed by the hidden counsel of God, so that nothing can come to pass but was ordained by him.' The Assembly Catechism is similar: 'God did, from all eternity, unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass.' But 'we believe that the character and acts of intelligent beings, so far at least as their moral accountability is concerned, are not definitely fixed and efficiently produced by the unalterable purpose and efficient decree of God.' Here, therefore, we are at issue.

"The more common and plausible argument for fore-ordination is, that the 'foreknowledge of God necessarily *implies* predestination. For how can an action that is really to come to pass be foreseen if it be not determined? God foreknew everything from eternity; but this he could not have known if he had not so determined it. God's decree precedes his knowledge.' Fisk objects: 'Prescience is an essential quality of the divine nature. But a determination to do this or that is not essential to the divine nature. . . . But *to know* is so essential to him that the moment he ceases to know all that is, or will be, or might be, under any possible contingency, he ceases to be God. Is it not absurd to make an essential attribute of Deity depend upon the

exercise of his attributes? . . . If God must predetermine events in order to know them, then, as the cause is in no case dependent on the effect, the decrees of God must be passed and his plan contrived independently of his knowledge, which only had an existence as the effect of these decrees.' It is better to say 'that the plan of the Almighty is the *result* of his infinite knowledge.' So runs Scripture: 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.' In these passages predestination and election are most clearly founded on foreknowledge.

"But, pleads Calvinism: 'The foreknowledge of God is tantamount to a decree, since God cannot be in a mistake: whatever he foreknows must take place; his knowledge makes it certain.' This is shifting the argument; for if God's knowledge makes an event certain, of course it is not his predetermination. 'Does the event take place because it is foreknown, or is it foreknown because it will take place?' He would be considered a fool or madman who should seriously assert that the knowledge of a certainty produced that certainty.

"To deny Calvinian predestination is not to deny that God has a perfect plan. God, whose eye surveys immensity and eternity at a glance, and who knows all possibilities and contingencies, all that is or will be, can perfectly arrange his plan, and preclude the possibility of a disappointment, though he does not, by a decree of predestination, fix all the volitions and acts of his subjects. . . . Nor does it follow, because God hath predestinated some things, that he hath decreed all things. Those passages, then, which are so frequently quoted as

proof of this doctrine, which only prove that God hath predetermined certain events, are not proof in point. We know of many passages which say of certain events which have come to pass, that God did not command them nor will them, but forbade them.

"All the stock quotations from Scripture to prove this dogma are shown not to prove it. We give an example or two: 'He hath blinded their minds and hardened their hearts.' 'Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain.' . . . God blinds men and hardens their hearts judicially, as a just punishment for abuse of their free agency. For his blinding and hardening them, he does not make them responsible. He holds them responsible for that degree of wickedness which made it just and necessary to give them over to this hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

"Calvinism makes God the author of sin. Calvin says, 'I will not scruple to own that the will of God lays a necessity on all things, and that everything he wills necessarily comes to pass.' Yet they deny that God is the author of sin, because they say, 'God necessitates them to the act, and not to the deformity of sin;' or 'God does not sin when he makes men sin, because *he* is under no law and cannot sin.' But these are miserable shifts. Has not the *deformity* of sin come to pass? Then God has decreed that deformity.

"This doctrine of predestination destroys human free agency and accountability. By ample quotations from Southey's 'Life of Wesley' it is shown that Mr. Wesley and Mr, Fletcher were roundly abused by the Calvinists of their time because they taught the freedom of the

human will. He cites these words from Calvin: 'Every motion and action of every creature is governed by the hidden counsel of God.' Hence man 'wills as he is made to will, — he chooses as he must choose, for the immutable decree of Jehovah is upon him.' But such volition cannot involve moral responsibility. It is argued that man is responsible because he feels that he acts freely. This is a good argument, upon our principles, to prove that men are free; on Calvinistic ground it proves that God has deceived us. He has made us feel that we might do otherwise, but he knows we cannot, — he has determined that we shall not.

"This doctrine arrays God's secret decrees against his revealed word. God commands men not to sin, and yet ordains that they shall sin. His rule of action is in direct opposition to our rule of duty. Is God at war with himself, or is he sporting and trifling with his creatures? We are told, to relieve the difficulty, that this seeming contradiction is one of the mysteries of God's incomprehensible nature. But it is not a seeming contradiction, it is a real one.

"This dogma takes from God his goodness. Hence it breeds Universalism.

"Calvinism teaches that, 'By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life God, before the foundation of the world, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, *without any foresight of faith or good works.*' We hold that God did decree, from the beginning, to elect, or choose in Christ, all that should believe unto salvation, and this decree proceeds from his own good-

ness, and is not built on any goodness in the creature; and that God did decree to reprobate all who should finally and obstinately continue in unbelief. Ours is an election of character, theirs ignores character in the elect. With the latter go, as natural concomitants, 'Irresistible grace, effectual calling, and infallible perseverance.' . . . We assert that election to eternal life is conditional, they unconditional. 'Election to salvation, in Scripture, is founded on the divine prescience.' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' These Scriptures seem decisive that the decree of election rests on foreknowledge, and that this election is made, not according to the arbitrary act of God, but on the ground of sanctification and obedience.

"Such an election annihilates human free agency and moral responsibility in man, doctrines of which the Holy Scriptures and the human conscience are full. With the Calvinistic election to life eternal all those Scriptures are inconsistent which warn believers against falling and apostasy. Calvinists will not allow that there is any danger of counteracting or frustrating the plan of the Almighty. Hence there is no danger of the elect coming short of salvation. All the exhortations, cautions, and warnings, therefore, recorded in the Scriptures, are false colors and deceptive motives. They are like the attempts of some weak parents to frighten their children into obedience by superstitious tales and groundless fears. God knows, when he is giving out these intimations of danger, that there is no such danger;

his own eternal, unchangeable decree had secured their salvation before the means were planned, — if election is unconditional. But far be this from a God of truth. When God warns, there is real danger.

"The Scriptures teach a conditional election. 'For many are called, but few chosen.' This passage, with the parable of the wedding that precedes it, teaches that the *choice* was made subsequently to the call, and was grounded upon the fact that those chosen had actually and fully complied with the invitation, and come to the wedding duly prepared.

"'He hath chosen us from the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons.' (Eph. i. 4, 5.) 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,' and 'whom he did predestinate, he called, justified, glorified.' (Rom. viii. 29.) The argument is, that predestination could not be founded on their faith or holiness, because they were predestinated to *become* holy; predestination had their holiness for its object and end. But if these passages had an allusion to a personal election to eternal life, they would not prove unconditional election, 'because,' to use the language of another, 'it would admit of being questioned whether the choosing here mentioned was a choice of certain persons as men merely, or as believing men, which is the most rational.' But this exposition must be given to the passage from Romans, since they who were subjects of predestination were first foreknown, — foreknown, not merely as existing, since all were so foreknown, but foreknown as possessing something which operated as a reason why *they* should be elected rather than others. The ninth chapter of

Romans is shown to deal, not with the personal election of individuals, but the making the Gentiles 'heirs of the promises.' Along with these differences of lot and nationality goes the maxim, 'It is required of a man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.'

"'Unconditional election implies unconditional reprobation. To the reprobates there is no grace or mercy extended. Their very existence, connected as it necessarily is with eternal damnation, is an infinite curse.' This theory makes God partial and a respecter of persons. . . . Had God nothing to do with man until his prescient eye beheld the whole race in a ruined state? How came man in that state? He was plunged there by the sin of his federal head. But how came he to sin? 'Adam sinned,' Calvin says, 'because God so ordained.' Taking all the links together, they stand thus: God decreed to create intelligent creatures; he decreed that they should all become sinners and children of wrath: and it was so. He then decreed that part of those whom he had constituted children of wrath should be taken, and washed, and saved, and the others left to perish; and then we are told that there is no unjust partiality in God, since they all deserve to be damned. What a singular evasion is this! This dogma limits the atonement, which the Scriptures make universal."

Of the reviews called out in Calvinistical journals by Dr. Fisk's sermon, perhaps the most remarkable appeared in the "Boston Telegraph." The writer agreed with Dr. Fisk in saying of the dogma of Calvinism concerning sin, "The fiat of God brought forth sin as directly as it made the

world." The criticisms of Rev. David Metcalf and of Dr. Fitch are made from a stand-point essentially Arminian. "Let me say once for all, I do not consider these gentlemen, nor any who think with them, responsible for the doctrine of predestination as stated and opposed in the sermon." He explains his failure to except them from his criticisms by saying: "The views of Dr. Taylor and 'those who think with him,' on this particular point, were unknown to me at the time. It is but lately that those views have been developed, never so fully before as in Dr. Fitch's review of my sermon. That any set of men, holding on the article of predestination the doctrine of James Arminius, John Wesley, and the whole body of Methodists, would call themselves Calvinists, never occurred to me. This is all the apology I have to offer, and whether or not it is sufficient the public must judge." This position Dr. Fisk proves clearly. One of the facts which went far to justify this assertion was, that men like Drs. Woods, Griffin, Tyler, and Green also charged the New Haven divines with rank Arminianism. While two classes of Calvinists thus agreed with Dr. Fisk's statements respecting these Calvinistic dogmas and their logical consequences, "a third deny my definition of their doctrine. They say they are not chargeable with such a doctrine, either directly or by implication." This is the next issue. These persons "deny that the responsible acts of moral agents are definitely fixed and efficiently produced

by the purpose and decree of God;" that these acts "are the result of an overruling and controlling power;" "that the will, in all its operations, is governed and irresistibly controlled by some secret impulse, some fixed and all-controlling arrangement." The aim is to prove that these are the real traits of Calvinism. First, there is a universal consensus that such are the Calvinistic doctrines amongst anti-predestinarians. But many predestinarians also ascribe these characteristics to the system. This was openly done by the "Boston Telegraph" and the New Haven party. The terms the Calvinists use are "decree," "predestination," "foreordination," "predetermination," "purpose." The adjectives that commonly modify these nouns are, "sovereign," "eternal," "immutable." "They are the *secret counsels* of his own will; and so far from being law that often, perhaps oftener than otherwise, in the moral world, they are in direct opposition to the precepts of the law. When these decrees come in conflict with the law they supersede it. Laws may sometimes be broken; these decrees, never. God commits his laws to subordinate moral agents, who may keep or break them. But his decrees he executes himself." In a controversy with Dr. Taylor, these persons "strenuously maintain that sin, wherever it occurs, is preferable to holiness in its stead, and is the necessary means of the greatest good."

Dr. Chalmers, in a sermon on predestination, says: —

"Every step of every individual's character receives as determinate a character from the hand of God as every mile of a planet's orbit, or every gust of the wind, or every wave of the sea, or every particle of flying dust, or every rivulet of flowing water. This power of God knows no exceptions: it is absolute and unlimited. And while it embraces the vast, it carries its resistless influence to all the minute and unnoticed diversities of existence. It *reigns* and operates through all the secrecies of the inner man. It gives birth to every purpose, it gives impulse to every desire, it gives color and shape to every conception. It wields an entire ascendency over every attribute of the mind; and the will, the fancy, and the understanding, with all the countless variety of their hidden and fugitive operations, are submitted to it. It gives movement and direction through every one point of our pilgrimage. At no moment of time does it abandon us. It follows us to the hour of death, and it carries us to our place and to our everlasting destiny in the region beyond it."

Calvinists uniformly use the same terms, "decree," "predestination," etc., in the same sense in regard to all necessary events. They say God's decrees extend to all events, physical and moral, good and evil.

To tell us a thousand times, without any distinction or discrimination, that all things are *equally* the result of the divine decree, and then tell us that the relation between God's decree and sin is essentially different from the relation existing between his decree and holiness, would certainly be a very singular and unwarrantable use of language.

How, then, does God produce holy volitions? Why, say the Calvinists, by a direct, positive, and efficient influence upon the will. Well, how does God execute his decrees respecting unholy volitions? Consistency requires the same reply. But, says the Calvinist, he need not exert the same influence to produce unholy volitions, because it is in accordance with the nature of sinful men to sin. Indeed, and is not this *nature* the result of a decree? It would seem that God approaches the work of executing his decree respecting sin either more reluctantly or with greater difficulty, so that it requires two steps to execute this, but only one the other. It is, however, in both cases equally his work. This will be more clearly seen if we turn our attention to the first sin; for it is certainly as much against a perfectly holy nature to commit sin as it is against an unholy nature to have a holy volition. Hence the one as much requires a direct, positive influence as the other.

The theory of motives as related to volition runs, "The power of volition is never excited, nor *can* be, except in the presence and from the excitement of motives. Hence the strongest motive rules the will (see 'Views in Theology'). . . . Since God creates both the mind and the motives, and brings them together for the express purpose that the former should be swayed by the latter, it follows conclusively that God efficiently controls the will, and produces all its volitions. It is stated in 'Views in Theology' that 'God is the determiner of per-

ceptions, and perceptions are the determiner of choices.' Hence the inference, *God is the determiner of choices.*

But it is urged, "'We know that we are free and responsible, because we are conscious of it.' If this doctrine is true, I am not *sure* that I am free and responsible because I feel that I am. I am quite as conscious that I ought not to be held responsible for what is unavoidable as I am that I am possessed of moral liberty."

What "constitutes man a free moral agent? It is the power of choice, connected with the liberty to choose either good or evil. Both the power and the liberty to choose either good or evil are requisite to constitute the free agency of a probationer." "When asked, 'How can you reconcile with free agency that kind of divine efficiency necessary to secure the execution of the decrees, and that kind of dependence of moral agents which this efficiency implies?' the answer is, 'We cannot tell, — the how in the case we cannot explain.'"

To this Dr. Fisk demurs: "When you say, 'God executes his decrees by controlling the will of man,' and also, 'The mind of man is free,' both these propositions are clear; there is nothing mysterious about them. But you say, perhaps, 'The mystery is, in want of light to see the agreement of the two:' we cannot see their agreement, but we should not therefore infer that they do not agree. 'What is light in this case but a clear perception of the propositions?' This we have, and we see that they

are in their nature incompatible; and the more light you pour upon them, the more clearly must this incompatibility appear. If you say, 'Perhaps neither you nor I fully understand these propositions,' I reply, 'We have no business to use them.' 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'

"It is presumed, if the question came to this, that they must either give up human liberty or predestination, candid Calvinists themselves would not hesitate; they would say the former must stand, whatever becomes of the latter. Hence, predestinarians themselves being judges, the doctrine of predestination is not so clear as some moral truths. Hence man is not responsible for the inevitable, the divinely controlled elements of his life.

"Only one further theory needs to be particularly noticed, because it is the most plausible of all, so that, if this will not bear the test, it is probable no other will; and, second, because this is the theory pretty generally, and perhaps almost universally, adopted by Calvinists: I mean the Calvinistic doctrine of motives. It is in substance this: the power of choice is that power which the mind has of acting in view of motives, and of deciding according to the strongest motive. And this relation between mind and motives is fixed by the very constitution of our natures, so that it may be said to be a constitutional necessity that the mind should be controlled by motives.

"But all the arguments pleaded in favor of this

absolute subjection of one class of minds to the absolute control of motives, hold equally well in respect to all minds, hence, to the Divine Mind. Here Edwards and Spinoza are absolutely in agreement. Professor Upham states the doctrine in these words: —

"'Our condition in this respect seems to be essentially the same with that of the Creator himself, — he is *inevitably* governed in all his doings by what is wisest and best. It is believed there is no avoiding this conclusion; and what then? Why, then, the doctrine makes God a necessary agent, and leads to atheism. Of what use is such a Deity? Might we not as well have none?'"

"This doctrine tends to materialism. Leibnitz illustrates it in this way: 'It is as if a needle touched with a loadstone were sensible of, and pleased with, its turning to the north; for it would believe that it turned itself, independent of any other cause, not perceiving the insensible motions of the magnetic power.' This quotation is important because it shows that one of the most philosophical defenders of this doctrine considered the law of motive influence similar to magnetic attraction, differing only in being accompanied by sensation and a deceptive consciousness." As the choices of the human mind obey their motives as assuredly as physical effects come from their causes, this doctrine delights in illustration drawn from the realm of physics, — a realm where all shadow of freedom has visibly disappeared. Hence Edwards "compares our volitions to the vibrations

of a scale beam, the different ends of which are respectively elevated or depressed as the weights vary."

A further objection is, that this theory destroys the very existence of self-originated action. And yet another trouble is, "it leads to the notion of conversion by moral suasion merely. If *motives* govern the will absolutely, all you need to convert a sinner is to bring a motive strong enough to make him choose God as his chief good, and he is converted. Well might a divine of this cast, whom I heard preach not long since, say of regeneration, 'There is nothing supernatural or miraculous in it.' For surely it is one of the most natural things in the world to be converted. It is only to be operated upon by motive, according to the law of his natural constitution, and the man is converted."

Over against all these favorite theories of a natural ability or a gracious ability in unregenerate man to obey God and gain heaven, which were invented by their authors to save their theories from fatal embarrassment, though the theories are as incapable of salvation as reprobate souls, Dr. Fisk set up the Methodist article, "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable unto God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when

we have that good will." With this view Dr. Fisk has no trouble in showing that the older Calvinists, like the Synod of Dort and Calvin, agreed. The Synod says of man after the fall, "Man is but a slave to sin, and has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven." "They believed that whenever this grace was imparted to an extent to restore to the mind the power of choosing good, it was regenerating grace; while the Arminians believe that grace may and does restore the power to choose good before regeneration."

Then we find "that God actually gives grace to those who finally perish. It is said even of the unregenerate that they grieve, resist, and quench the spirit of grace. God gives grace to the reprobates that their condemnation may be the more aggravated." The argument stands thus: "God gives grace to the reprobates for some important purpose. He does not give it that salvation may be possible to them; without it they can be saved. He does not give it to make salvation certain, for this it does not effect; nevertheless he gives them grace, the invariable effect of which is to increase their condemnation."

To assume that reprobates have ability, whether natural or moral, to obey God, leaves it possible that some reprobate may use his powers so as to gain eternal life. So, too, an elect soul may use its natural power of obedience long before grace has visited it, — a new kind of salvation by the works of the law. The Scriptures abundantly

teach this doctrine of human inability: "Without me ye *can* do nothing;" "no man *can* come unto me except the Father draw him." All the other schools of Calvinists agree in calling Dr. Taylor's theory, that a man can regenerate himself, Pelagian error.

Some make God the sole agent, and man purely passive, in regeneration. The Pelagian error leaves man free from any perilous defect until his own choice should make him sinful. With such a view of the nature of conversion, infants who die before the age of responsible action must face another life with no character whatever. As the whole work of regeneration lies in a change of volitions, man is in no absolute dependence on the Holy Ghost. He becomes his own Saviour.

Methodists "say 'the saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men;' and that this grace so enlightens, strengthens, and aids the human mind that it is thereby enabled to make that choice which is the turning-point, conditionally, of the soul's salvation; and that it is by this same gracious aid that the man, when he has this good will, is enabled to work out his salvation to the end.

"We believe that the merits of the atonement are so available in behalf of the human family that the guilt of depravity is not imputed to the subject of it until, by intelligent volitions, he makes the guilt his own by resisting and rejecting the grace of the gospel; and that, being thus by grace in a justified state, the dying infant is entitled to all the blessings of the new covenant."

Dr. Fisk closes a long discussion of the various views of natural and moral ability with the following summary, with which we shall have to be content, instead of giving the details of his reasoning: "1. Adam did not render himself incapable of sinning by the fall, but rather rendered himself and his posterity incapable of any other moral exercise but what was sinful; and it was on this account that a gracious ability was necessary in order to a second probation. 2. Sin, since the fall, has not been the result of supernatural grace, but the natural fruit of the fall; and supernatural grace is all that has counteracted sin. 3. Man needed the grace of God, both because he was wicked and because he was weak. 4. The moral difference between one man and another is to be ascribed to God and not themselves. We say the sinful nature of man is changed in regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost. 5. The posterity of Adam did need a Saviour to atone for actual sin. For actual sin is the result, not of gracious power, as some think, but of a sinful nature voluntarily retained and indulged. 6. This opinion is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of grace. 7. There is constant guilt in the present rebellion of the infernal regions. 8. This grace is a greater blessing to our race than the fall of Adam was a calamity, for where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

To clear the ground for his own discussion of the doctrine of regeneration, the erroneous views

are first examined by Dr. Fisk. The first is the theory that man is entirely passive in regeneration, or, if active, active only in opposition. The second is the theory of self-conversion. Here the spirit "acts in some indefinable way through the truth as an instrument. The truth acts on the mind in the way of moral suasion, and the sinner, in the view and by the influence of truth, resolves to give himself to God and to his service, and this is regeneration.

These views of regeneration are carefully tested, and shown to be inconsistent with the dictates of common sense and with the declarations of Scripture. Dr. Fisk thinks these views exhaust the possibilities of the Calvinistical system. "There can be but two alternatives: either God must renew the heart, independent of all coöperation on the part of the subject of this change, — and this is the old doctrine of unconditional divine efficiency, — or the first acceptable act of the will must be regeneration; and this is the new doctrine of self-conversion."

At last Dr. Fisk states the Scripture doctrine of regeneration as follows: —

1. The work of regeneration is performed by the direct and efficient operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

2. The Holy Spirit exerts this regenerating power only on conditions to be complied with by the subject of the change. The first statement would be denied only by Socinians (whose views

are not debated), and the persons whose views he has just subjected to such a critical discussion as entitled him to leave them in order to discuss the conditionality of the work of the Holy Ghost in the regeneration of men.

"If I were called on to give a general definition of Calvinism that would include all the species that claim the name, I would say, Calvinists are those who believe in unconditional regeneration. For the moment this point is given up by any one, all agree that he is not a Calvinist."

The Scriptures themselves do not condemn a conditional new birth. The difficulties raised are mainly of a metaphysical nature: such are, a depraved sinner cannot perform an acceptable condition until he is regenerated; God cannot consistently accept any act short of that which constitutes regeneration; that the idea of conditional regeneration implies salvation by works, in part at least, and not wholly by grace.

Neglecting a present response to these objections, an account is given of those characteristics of the mind which are the basis of the ability to perform conditions acceptable to God. 1. Conscience lays the foundation of the notions of right and wrong, so that we feel approval or disapproval of our conduct, . . . *and even in an unregenerate state* this susceptibility often operates in accordance with its original design, and therefore agreeably to the Divine Will.

The intellect may, in an unregenerate state, be

so enlightened and informed on the subject of divine truth as to perceive right and wrong, and to perceive, to some extent, the way of salvation pointed out in the gospel.

That the affections (often called the heart) are the principal seat of depravity, and that these are often arrayed in direct opposition to the convictions of the judgment, and the feelings of moral obligation.

That the will, or volitional power, while it is more or less, directly or indirectly, influenced by the judgment, the conscience, and the affections, is designed to give unity and direction to the whole mental action. And it always accomplishes this where there is a proper harmony in the mental powers. The unholy affections have gained an undue ascendency, so that in the unregenerate, in all questions of preference between God and the world, despite conscience, judgment, will, the world is loved and God is hated.

That in those cases where we cannot control our affections by a direct volition, we may, under the promptings of conscience and in the light of the judgment, resolve against sin; but these resolutions will be carried away and overruled by the strength of the carnal mind. This shows us our weakness and drives us to self-despair, until, under the enlightening influence of grace, and the drawings of the Spirit, the soul is led to prayer and to an abdication of itself into the hands of the Divine Mercy through Christ; and *then*, and on *these conditions*,

the Holy Spirit changes the character and current of the unholy affections: and this is regeneration.

"It is objected that the action of the mind under such motives is purely selfish. . . . This objection to a mental act, merely because it is prompted by self-love, has always been to me a matter of wonder. All alike condemn selfishness. But that self-love which leads us to seek our own highest interests, and especially our eternal interests, without injury to others, and in accordance with the Divine Will, is never thought criminal, except where one has a particular system to serve by such a notion."

To this enslavement of the will by sin it is objected that it destroys accountability, since no man is to blame for what he cannot avoid. "But I have not said they cannot avoid it; I assert directly the contrary. Every probationer decides whether he will be holy." This enthrallment of the will to sin is strongly depicted in the last part of the seventh and the first part of the eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members." . . . "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." The same appears in Gal. v. 17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things ye would." After setting aside various ob-

jections to his views, Dr. Fisk sums up the conditional aspects of regeneration as follows: —

"Faith seems to be the exclusive channel through which every gracious effect is produced on the mind. The sinner cannot be awakened without faith, for it precedes every judgment in favor of truth, and every motion of moral feeling, and of course every favorable concurrence of the will. The sinner never could throw himself upon the Divine mercy, never would embrace Christ as his Saviour, until he believed. Hence the Scriptures lay such great stress upon faith, and make it the grand, and indeed the only immediate, condition of the work of grace upon the heart. Repentance is a condition only remotely in order to a justifying faith, agreeably to the teaching of Christ: 'And ye, when ye had heard, afterward repented not, that ye might believe on him.' But faith is necessary immediately, as that mental state directly antecedent to the giving up the soul into the hands of the Divine mercy. And shall we still be told that faith is not the condition of regeneration? The order of the work seems to be: 1. A degree of faith in order to repentance; 2. Repentance, in order to such an increase of faith as will lead the soul to throw itself upon Christ; 3. The giving up the soul to Christ as the only ground of hope; 4. The change of heart by the efficient operation of the Holy Spirit. Now, on whichever of these four stages of the process, except the first, the objector lays his finger and says, *That* is not a condition of regeneration, for it is regeneration itself, it will be seen that *that* very part, call it regeneration or what you will, is conditional. If, for instance, he fix on the second stage, and contend that

that is regeneration, which I call repentance in order to regenerating faith, — even that would be conditional, for this repentance is preceded by faith; and so of all that follow. And surely no one will contend that what I call the first stage, the faith which precedes awakening and remorse of conscience, and the exciting alternations of hope and fear in the anxious and inquiring sinner, is regeneration."

CHAPTER VII.

THE EDUCATOR. — WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY.

THE report of the Committee on Education to the General Conference in 1828 was a long and able document drawn by Wilbur Fisk. It begins with a statement of the efforts already made in different conferences to comply with the instructions of the Conference of 1820, that classical schools should be established within the bounds and under the patronage of the annual conferences. The work is summarized as follows: —

"In review of the whole, we find the successful efforts in the different conferences to promote the cause of literature and science have increased very considerably since the last General Conference. There are six or seven promising institutions in successful operation, two of them having college charters, namely, Madison College and Augusta College, which are already prepared to take students through a regular course, and confer upon them the ordinary degrees and literary honors of such institutions, and hold forth encouragements and assurances that authorize us to commend them to the patronage of our friends. Other institutions are advancing to the same standing, and several more are contemplated and will soon be in operation. It is a matter that calls for special gratitude to God that revivals of religion are so

frequent in our colleges. This ought to encourage and stimulate our people to patronize these institutions. . . .

"The subject of education ought to be considered of special importance and of special interest to Methodist ministers, both as it respects their own usefulness and that of their families. A cultivated church will have a cultivated ministry."

The report ends with these resolutions: —

"1. Our people are not sufficiently awake as yet to establish a university for the whole connection.

"2. Not half the conferences are yet provided with academies under their own patronage, and we think it more congenial with our religion, our civil government, and the good of society to make provision for the common instruction of the *many* before we exert ourselves to endow and establish a university for the *few*.

"It is still questionable whether, even for the most liberal course of education, one university for the whole connection would, on the whole, be so well patronized and attended as two or three.

"Single conferences, or groups of two or three conferences, should establish seminaries that shall promote literature, morality, industry, and a practical knowledge of the arts of useful life. . . . God will give success to their labors, so that not only their own children but future generations will rise up and call them blessed."

In Cazenovia, New York, and Kent's Hill, Maine, academies had been established like that at Wilbraham. Here young men were prepared for college, but when they were ready no Methodist college could readily be found to take the further charge of their education. It was obvious

that such a condition of things could not continue with safety. There was much talk of expanding the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham into a college. The people of Bridgeport, Conn., and of Troy, N. Y., put forth efforts to secure the establishment of the proposed college amongst themselves. The "American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy" had been opened at Middletown, Conn., in 1825, by Captain Alden Partridge, the first superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Failure to obtain a charter in Connecticut ultimately led Captain Partridge to remove his institution to Norwich, Vt.

Thus the two solid and spacious stone buildings erected for the use of the military school, with the grounds and other property, were left unoccupied. This entire property, valued at $30,000, was offered to a joint committee of the New York and the New England Conferences on two conditions: first, that it should always be used as a university; and, second, that $40,000 should be raised for an endowment fund. This fund was soon raised, a board of trustees appointed, and the college was established under the name of "The Wesleyan University."

At the first meeting of the Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the infant college, Dr. Fisk was elected President of Wesleyan University. After some hesitation, an answer was sent in these terms: —

"*To the Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Wesleyan University now in session at Middletown, Conn.*

"GENTLEMEN, — With a high sense of the confidence reposed in me by a majority of your board, in electing me president of your proposed university, I tender you my sincere and grateful acknowledgments. I have a deep conviction of my own inability to perform the important and responsible duties connected with this appointment. In accordance, however, with the judgment of my friends, and in reliance upon the cordial and united aid of the board, and of the colleagues who have been or may be appointed, and especially in a humble reliance upon Almighty God, without whose assistance the most gifted labor in vain, I will engage to the extent of my ability in the service of the board, in the discharge of the duties assigned me, as soon as I can, in honor and justice, disengage myself from my present relation to another institution.

"W. FISK."

It was not until the ensuing spring that Dr. Fisk removed his family from Wilbraham to Middletown. Had Dr. Fisk had his own way, the opening of the college would have been deferred until the fall of 1832, that the intervening time might be devoted to the work of making the best possible arrangements for such an enterprise. The halls of the University were thrown open for the admission of students the 21st of September, 1831, with appropriate ceremonies. From the Inaugural Address of Dr. Fisk we gather the scope, peculiarities, and the prospects of the new

institution. His theme was, "The Science of Education."

Education aims at two things, — the good of the educated man, and the good of the world. Omitting the first point as too evident to be debated, attention is drawn to arguments to show that education should look steadily at the improvement of the world. The greater ease of travel and communication these days renders mutual interest and mutual acquaintance most natural and desirable. "The general interests of learning, and the mutual alliance of the friends of literature, also greatly increase this general union. These, though scattered over the world, form a republic of themselves, and are drawn together by cords that no distance can attenuate, and bound by connections that no vanities can sever. They all drink from the same fountains without jealousy, and climb up the same intellectual elevations without envy; for the attainments of each are the property of all." The Christianity of the age sees in every man a brother, and in every land a fresh realm of Christ. The same spirit has free sweep in the political world.

Under these circumstance the function of Christian education becomes very serious: "Ministers and merchants, lawyers and physicians, teachers and statesmen, farmers and mechanics, authors and artists, all are wanted in this work, and wanted in greater abundance than can be supplied." He would have men of all professions alike serve God

in their professional careers, and will have it that any lower view is base and pernicious. He thinks that nowhere else are there so many or such good materials for such an education as here in New England.

"A young man thus educated is prepared for active life. He is prepared to rely upon himself; his habits of industry and economy are formed; and he, of all others, is the man for the great interests of the world."

Next he asks what tone and character should be given to the minds of the pupils, what knowledge imparted to secure these great purposes.

Education should procure the physical, the intellectual, and moral perfection of its recipients. If a man cannot combine great knowledge with great usefulness, let him prefer usefulness. "The great object which we propose to ourselves in the work of education is to supply, as far as we may, men who will be both willing and competent to effect the political, intellectual, and spiritual regeneration of the world."

With the best mental training should go very careful attention to bodily health. Dr. Fisk was still, though not without some misgiving, inclined to rate the physical exertion of farming or of working in shops, the best form of physical exercise. "The mind should be cultivated with direct reference to the object of making the pupil a man of enterprise and activity. Everything that is calculated to call forth such a spirit should be

cherished, and everything which discourages it should be discountenanced." Independence, self-dependence, intellectual alertness, and enlightened and universal benevolence, are traits which education ought to bring out into rich and effective operation.

"Modern literature, the natural and exact sciences, and the application of the sciences to the useful arts, are first in importance in a useful education. Next in order I would place mental and moral philosophy, and the kindred sciences; last, and least in consequence for the great portion of students, I would place ancient literature, the graces of learning, and the fine arts. . . . If a knowledge of the ancient languages were of no other importance than to preserve the purity of the Holy Scriptures, and secure a correct translation of them into other languages, this of itself would keep them in credit, and make a critical study of them necessary. . . .

"It may be proper that most students, who have an opportunity of commencing their education early and of pursuing it without embarrassment, should obtain some general knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages; especially as there is an age in the development of the youthful mind in which language can be pursued to greater advantage than any other study. And if, at that age, a good foundation can be laid for a knowledge of etymology, of philology in general, and for a more ready attainment of the modern languages, this might be advantageous to the pupil."

After touching upon the whole material side of education with breadth and liberality, Dr. Fisk says: —

"The proper organization of the board of instruction is a matter of great moment and of difficult attainment. All agree that they should be united among themselves; that they should be men of learning, apt to teach, industrious in their habits, energetic and enterprising in their character, interested in their work, and faithful in the performance of their duties. But how to obtain such men, how to keep them after they are put in place, and how to get rid of them if they do not prove such, are questions that have never been satisfactorily settled. After the greatest precautions, improper persons may be introduced into the board of instruction."

To hinder such dangers Dr. Fisk would have the faculty partners in filling every vacancy in their board, have the salary rise with the growing success of each officer, and have incompetent instructors removed from office.

"A college corporation should have a committee to examine into the standing of their officers of instruction, as regularly as one to audit the accounts of their treasurer. And to do this it is not necessary to examine these officers. Their official character will be written on the mind of their pupils, and may be known and read of all men. It has been well said, that 'he who cannot put his mark upon a student is not fit to have one.'[1] Let it be a condition of office, that when a teacher's pupils are deficient, he must give place to another."

As to government, he would have it proceed wholly from the faculty.

"A code of statute laws for the officers to execute among the students will never be respected. . . . The

[1] Dr. F. Wayland.

intercourse between the student and the president and professors should be of an affectionate and familiar character. I cannot close these remarks on the subject of government without giving my decided testimony in favor of a moral and religious influence to aid in the government of youth. This is of paramount importance. Several years' experience in the government of a literary institution has convinced me that there is nothing like it. With such an influuence, government is easy; without it, good government is impossible."

In reference to the classification and graduation of students, Dr. Fisk would have had the old method of arranging them by years given up, in order that they might be distributed in all the departments in which they were studying any given year. In this way class distinctions based on time would be done away, and you could only learn by the college catalogues in how many departments a man was at work, and how far advanced he was in each. By this method it was thought that the less faithful or less able students might be retained in college until they could pass a satisfactory examination in all their work, while the abler men might be graduated on the actual completion of their course; while weak and shiftless students would not obtain their diplomas merely because they had been four years in college, and had taken in as much scholarship as would just pass them up at the end of each year. The uneducated graduate ought to disappear.

It is certain that Dr. Fisk overestimated the

efficiency of his measures to suppress the uneducated graduate. It is also certain that the new mode of classification did not attract a large number of students, whose circumstances or age compelled them to forego a classical education, to the Scientific Course he had blocked out for them with the appropriate degree of Bachelor of Science. Of the one hundred and fifteen who graduated under the presidency of Dr. Fisk only five took the science degree, while all the rest took the regular classical degrees. In 1836 the students were first classified by their year in college and not by departments, an innovation which has proved permanent. After a year or two the salaries of the professors were equalized. Thus two features of the institution upon which Dr. Fisk laid great stress disappeared forever. The scheme of turning the daily exercise of the students into profitable farm-work or shop-work remained a dream, in spite of much talking and some vigorous resolving on its behalf. So, one after another, the visionary elements of the new scheme were detected and thrown aside. The Classical Course has maintained itself to this day. The English and Scientific Course is represented by two courses, the Scientific and Latin-Scientific Courses. It was not until the other courses were made nearly equal to the Classical in the preparation required for entering them, and the time and labor demanded for successfully executing them, that the non-classical or half-classical students felt their position respect-

able and respected. But while these varying plans were being tested thus by actual experiment, and the administration was shaped in harmony with the logic of actual results, Dr. Fisk was creating a new college under circumstances which showed the hand of a master builder. We have already seen how difficult and how important he deemed the obtaining and retaining of a proper faculty. If we consider with due care all the conditions under which the first faculty was collected and organized, we shall see how wise the mind that planned and how skillful the brain which pondered the conditions of the development of this faculty. The first charter of Wesleyan University provided that men of any religious creed might become students in Wesleyan University, and that no religious test should be exacted of any person elected to any office in the institution. At first, this principle was carried out by the election of certain officers who were not members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Certain facts must be borne in mind if we would understand how difficult this especial task, the creation of a proper faculty, was. First, the salaries offered were not such as would attract able men from the service of other colleges; and there were no other Methodist colleges from which trained men could be drawn. The only places where men were to be found who had obtained any experience in teaching were the seminaries at Wilbraham, Cazenovia, White Plains, and Kent's Hill. It was even more important than it was

difficult to obtain the best man for each place from such stinted sources of supply; for the fame of the wrong man in any place travels swifter and further than the countervailing success of his colleagues can. Then the removal of an unfit man is slow and painful and harmful. Let us look at the names of the men who were members of the faculty of Wesleyan University in Dr. Fisk's days. They were, Rev. John Mott Smith, the Rev. John Price Durbin, Mr. Augustus W. Smith, the Rev. Jacob F. Huber, Lieut. W. W. Mather, Rev. D. D. Whedon, the Rev. Joseph Holdich, Mr. John Johnston, Mr. William Magoun, Mr. Willard M. Rice, the Rev. William M. Willitt, Mr. Loren L. Knox, Oliver P. Hubbard, and D. H. Chase.

In Methodist circles it would be lost pains to praise John Price Durbin, the famous pulpit orator, chaplain to the United States Senate, and known world-wide for his brilliant career as missionary secretary. Mr. Augustus W. Smith, LL. D., after a brilliant career as Professor of Mathematics in the Wesleyan University, was elected the fourth president of the college in 1852, which office he filled acceptably until 1857. Rev. Daniel D. Whedon, after a promising career as head of classical studies in Wesleyan University, entered the ministry for a few years, when he became a professor in the University of Michigan, where he continued until driven away, by growing deafness and political management, from the work of teaching. In 1856 Dr. Whedon was elected

editor of the "Methodist Quarterly Review," an office in which he was continued, by successive quadrennial reëlections, twenty-eight years. Dr. Whedon was one of the most brilliant and painstaking of American editors. His work on the "Freedom of the Will," his "Commentary on the New Testament," intended for popular use, and two volumes of Essays, show powers of the highest range and capacity. Mr. John Johnston was for forty-two years Professor of Natural Science in Wesleyan University. Rev. Joseph Holdich, though not a college graduate, was a capable, industrious, and useful college officer, until he was made one of the secretaries of the American Bible Society, an office in which he served the church with great fidelity, until the failure of his sight compelled his retirement. The other professor of those days, the Rev. John Mott Smith, was a graduate of Columbia College, who had been engaged in teaching several years before he was made Professor of Ancient Languages at the organization of the new faculty. Mr. Smith was cut off suddenly ere his work at the college had gone beyond its beginnings. Those who had the best means for knowing him and his work felt that his career, had his life been spared, would have been as brilliant and useful as that of any other member of this remarkable faculty. The office of tutor in that early time was held by Mr. William Magoun, Oliver P. Hubbard, Daniel H. Chase, Mr. Willard M. Rice, Rev. W. M. Willitt, and Mr. Loren L. Knox.

Lieutenant W. W. Mather was acting-Professor of Natural Science at Wesleyan University for the year 1833–34. The same faultless judgment which found the right man for every professorship that was established, was apparent also in the selections for the minor positions in the board of instruction. Lieutenant Mather was a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point, who had been an assistant there in the same studies which he was employed to teach at Wesleyan University. His subsequent military and scientific career shows his fitness for services of a high order in his favorite lines of study. Mr. Oliver P. Hubbard, a graduate of Yale College, gave sure token as tutor in Wesleyan University of fitness for advancement to a college professorship, which he won at Dartmouth. Mr. Daniel H. Chase, the first graduate of Wesleyan University, here opened brilliantly his career of life-long service in the cause of education. Mr. W. M. Rice has had an honorable and useful career in the pastoral service of the Presbyterian Church; while Mr. Knox and Mr. Willitt have been quite as distinguished pastors in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. William Magoun, a graduate of Brown University in the year 1823, ran a somewhat peculiar career, but one of such high distinction as to show that he was a man of marked endowments and eminent culture. He taught in Brooklyn and New York after leaving Middletown; then practiced law awhile in New York, when he became private secretary and tutor

in the family of Hon. Nathan Niles, United States *chargé d'affaires* at Turin, Italy. In this and similar positions he continued to act until 1871. In 1867–68 he was consular agent of the United States for Turin and the provinces. He taught Italian and English in Turin, and was once English tutor to the royal family at Turin. He died there in 1871. He was a gentleman of courtly manners, varied and elegant accomplishments, and greatly loved and trusted by his acquaintances.

It is a remarkable fact that none of the men appointed to different positions on the board of instruction in Dr. Fisk's days was removed from it on account of dissatisfaction with the quality of his work. Death and calls to better positions elsewhere were the sole ground of the only changes made in the first faculty of the Wesleyan University, with a single exception, Professor Huber, the first Professor of Modern Languages. Mr. Huber had studied in the Gymnasium of Basle, his native place, so that German was his mother tongue, while his knowledge of French, Spanish and Italian was broad and accurate. He had already served five years as instructor in modern languages in Dickinson College, when he came to Wesleyan. Mr. Huber's department was one about which Dr. Fisk had no personal ability to decide, and was one where he was compelled to trust to recommendations from others. Such commendations Mr. Huber must have been able to present. The only fault ever charged to Mr. Huber was a want of self-control.

This simple story is enough to reveal the remarkable gift for organization and administration of Wilbur Fisk. As we see this set of seminary teachers gradually transformed into a college faculty which so far commanded public respect and confidence as to collect a body of one hundred and fifty students around them long before Wilbur Fisk's death, we are involuntarily reminded of the story of the artist's apprentice, who was employed merely to aid his master in such parts of the work of fashioning a gorgeous cathedral window into a splendid artistic masterpiece as could be wrought by rude and untaught hands, but whose untutored hands wrought the broken and rejected fragments, which had been flung aside as worthless, into such a matchless creation of peerless art as far outshone his own master's masterpiece. If there was a better or wiser administration in the early days of any other New England college than this, it has not come to my knowledge.

In his relations with the other members of the faculty, Dr. Fisk was as nearly a model as we may well hope to see. He took a very friendly attitude towards every associate in the board of instruction, for he felt profoundly the importance of prompting every man to the greatest exertion in the improvement of his powers of mind and opportunities for usefulness. He knew everything about them in their relation to the college and the public by observation, by inquiry, by conversation. When he was absent for any time, a frank and detailed

correspondence kept him informed as to the turn things were taking during his absence. Thus was such an atmosphere of vitality, of hopefulness, and of mutual affection created as would readily bring the college instruction to a high degree of efficiency. If the income of the college was not always sufficient to pay all the salaries of the officers, the only salary which was ever suffered to go unpaid was President Fisk's. This was probably the result of the president's natural thoughtfulness for others, though it was also the dictate of the soundest business principles.

Of the instruction of President Fisk, Dr. Holdich says: —

"He generally heard only one daily recitation, and attended to the weekly exercises in composition and declamation. The subjects included in his course of instruction were such as are common in most American colleges in the junior and senior years, embracing Rhetoric, Evidences of Christianity, Logic, Ethics, Mental Philosophy, with Political Economy, and the Elements of Constitutional Law. His recitations were always conducted from a text-book, but without a servile adherence to the author; and his mode of questioning was adapted to ascertain both how closely the students had studied the lesson, and how far they understood the subject. He allowed, and even encouraged, the utmost freedom on the part of the class; took pains to awaken interest; patiently listened to what any member had to say; and satisfied, as far as possible, all inquirers. Frequently he would illustrate the lesson by some stroke of humor or a pleasant anecdote; always taking care, however, to

maintain a proper dignity while thus ministering at once to instruction and entertainment. In short his intercourse with his classes had more the air of familiar converse than of formal recitations. He seemed to address them *ex animo* rather than *ex cathedra*. Thus he not only kept the mind of the student constantly on the alert, but also united in a good degree the advantages both of recitations and lectures. Courses of lectures he did not deliver, either because he preferred the other mode of teaching, or because his various engagements did not allow him to prepare them. But he delivered lectures occasionally, either on such portions of the subject as he thought not clearly or satisfactorily treated in the text-books, or on such topics as he desired to expand or enforce. These lectures were sometimes before the whole college." [1]

It was in his relations with the students that the peculiar charm and force of Dr. Fisk's system lay. He thought it so important that he should have ample opportunities for this work that he curtailed his class-room work in its favor, and he gave himself to it with the most unsparing zeal and affection. He was much occupied by calls from all his associates in order to obtain the advice, sympathy, and impulse of his practical and experienced mind. But, however busy he might be in any of these ways, he always had time enough for full, careful, and earnest conversation with any student who felt the need or made an occasion for a free conversation with him. In this way he came to know very thoroughly the make-up, the circumstances and pos-

[1] Holdich, *Life of Wilbur Fisk*, p. 322.

sibilities of the whole body of the students under his care. Hence any advice he gave them in regard to their college duties, or their personal pursuits after graduation, was uniformly marked by good sense, by insight into their wants and needs, and by a generous faith in their devotion to the highest interests of mankind. They felt that he had a profound personal interest in their honorable character and their usefulness in life. They felt it an honor and privilege that such a man as he was should be their friend and adviser. One of the most common remarks made by the men who studied under Dr. Fisk is this: "Whenever I find myself in a situation of difficulty and delicacy, I usually ask myself how Dr. Fisk would have acted in my situation, and when I have found a reasonable answer to that question, I know what to do myself." Like all good and wise advisers, this counselor's special helpfulness lay in his fidelity in pointing out the true course to be taken. Advisers there are who are spoken of as wise, sympathetic, and helpful, — whose sole wisdom lies in catching the secret bias of those who consult them, and telling them to obey that. Dr. Fisk was no such silly echo of other men's wishes and hopes. He showed the wisdom of taking the hard rather than the easy path, the true rather than the popular course, the religious rather than the godless life. He not only made men see that these were the best paths for men to walk in, but he made them feel that no other course must be thought of

for a moment, because the high and honorable line of conduct was possible for them all. Dr. Fisk was himself such an example of all the virtues he commended to others, that his words came home to men's hearts with great impressiveness. It is marvelous how a right example reinforces the might of right words. A man whose preaching has not persuaded himself, whose life exhibits all the weaknesses and vices he censures in others, who wants the supreme wisdom he would commend to others, can never be a successful teacher or preacher in the way of influencing character. Dr. Fisk's supreme appeal to his students came from the perfect blending in his own life and character of all the virtues and characteristics he commended to them. He was himself in a rare degree all that he would lead them to be. And he was so, not by the accident of a happy constitution, a singular career, or special gifts of divine grace, but by fidelity to homely and lowly duties, by using forces offered to all alike, and by obedience to light which shines alike for all.

Nor did he fail to point, to any who doubted of the possibility of their attaining the traits of character he recommended, that the divine Saviour's ears are open to the cries of the humblest and worst. Hence the possession of the highest character was the duty and the privilege of all. The religious side of the students was thus appealed to in the noblest and most spiritual way. Low character, unspirituality of soul, living for any but the

highest ends, all assumed in his presence their natural shame and deformity. They were crimes in the sight of God, and marks of shameful degradation in bearers of the divine image. It was the vivid impression of the reality and transforming power of these truths in the hands of Wilbur Fisk which made his personal intercourse with the students so beneficial. They loved him so greatly that all difficult things seemed easy under his leadership.

Out of this strong personal hold upon the students grew the strength and security of his government of the college. It rather often happened that he did not favor some of the schemes and measures of the students. On such occasions his view of things was pretty sure to prevail, but never merely because it was his view. Dr. Fisk would examine the arguments presented against his own view candidly, appreciate them at their full value, and then array against them the reasons which ought to be decisive so impressively that he usually convinced his opponents that they were wrong. He favored the organization of a temperance society among the undergraduates, and so that society had a flourishing career. But once, when there was a very active movement in college in favor of the establishment of another society, which he thought improper, he prevented its success. It was probably an abolition society. Committee after committee waited upon the president to secure permission for putting such a society into operation. They

stated their case in detail to the president, but so candid and cogent and public-spirited was his opposition to the proposal that he convinced the committee of the propriety of his views. The committee reported the result of their interview with the president to the college, whereupon a new committee was raised to wait upon the president. They also were converted to the propriety of this view, and so reported. As there was some excitement amongst the students on the matter, an attempt was made to send another committee with instructions to insist on the college view; but the persons appointed members of the committee declined service, on the ground that President Fisk was just as likely to convince them of the correctness of his position as the gentlemen who had already waited on him.

Like all other college presidents, Dr. Fisk sometimes had to deal with men who put his patience and forbearance to their sharpest test. We have no accounts from such persons of President Fisk's conduct towards them, nor copies of any letters addressed by him to themselves or their friends, for they naturally kept all such documents under the seal of silence and secrecy. A few letters written by such offenders to Dr. Fisk give us our only glimpse of his administration in such cases.

One of the peculiar features of these letters is the uniformity and the bitterness with which the writers confess that they have forfeited all claims to President Fisk's respect and affection, and the

palpable sincerity with which they protest that this is the severest punishment they have to bear. There is almost always a humble hope expressed that they may yet be able to regain the esteem of their honored friend. It is easy to see, in the position of these transgressors, both the restraining influence exerted by such character upon young men in circumstances of special temptation, and the fact that their eager longing for his full respect was one of the strongest motives to renew their struggles for regaining their standing. It took a pretty bad man to break away from him. Few gave him the slightest solicitude. He never spoke of the student's misdoings to his family or other friends, so that his self-respect might lead him to break off faults before they became notorious.

Among the questions which Dr. Fisk had to give early attention to was that of establishing schools of law, medicine, and theology, as the University was by its charter fully authorized to do. The best judges whom he confidentially consulted on these subjects advised him that the proper place for a medical school was a large city, while a law school was hardly advisable in an institution where so much needed to be done in the development of a college fit to take its place beside the most advanced colleges of the country. This advice has been substantially followed at Middletown to the present day. There has been until recently no necessity felt for the creation of a law school or a medical school under Methodist

auspices. With regard to theological schools the case stood differently; for why should Methodist colleges only conduct the education of their young ministers up to the point where their education should be directed wholly to those branches of study and science which are to be the themes of all their special study and exposition? These questions were put to Dr. Fisk by his associates in the work of education, and by the early graduates of Wesleyan University. He did not deem it wise for Methodist students to put themselves into the ranks of the students of non-Methodist theological seminaries. He proposed that the same course should be pursued at Wesleyan University that had been pursued at Harvard College and Yale College long before any theological course was thought of at either. Some of the studies of special importance to ministers were grouped together in the last year of the college course, so that the senior year was often called "divinity year." Then graduates might remain at college a year after graduation. Here are Dr. Fisk's reasons: —

"1. It will be a great saving of expense. In our literary institutions we have the buildings, the libraries, the teachers, already prepared. To get up and support separate establishments would almost double the expense. The attempt, therefore, in the present condition of these seminaries, would be likely to ruin both.

"2. By having an experienced and well-educated minister in these seminaries, this work can be accomplished to all needful extent.

"3. It will be a saving of time to the young men, who can thus mingle the study of theology with their other pursuits. It will become a part of their miscellaneous reading, and, in hours of relaxation, of their conversation; mind acting upon mind will elicit truth almost incidentally, and there will always be one to whom they can appeal to settle all doubtful questions.

"4. In this way we shall not be so much in danger of carrying speculation too far, so as to make the instruction end in dogmatism, or lead to the spinning out of new theories, as is the case sometimes in theological seminaries.

"5. In this way we should throw a greater amount of salt into our literary fountains, and thus get new and promising candidates for the ministry converted. What I have here proposed is not mere theory. I have acted upon this principle ever since I entered upon the business of education, and I have now a class of from twenty to thirty promising young men under this kind of training. . . . I ought, however, to say that the theological instruction which we impart is not made a part of the college course; it is extra and voluntary on their part and gratuitous on ours."

It is evident that the crowning objection to the establishment of theological schools in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Dr. Fisk's mind, was the financial one. A man of so much experience in teaching or study as Dr. Fisk could have looked upon such provisions for the instruction of young ministers as merely a temporary makeshift, only to be tolerated until the conference seminaries and university had become fully equipped with all the

necessary facilities and funds for doing their work in the best possible manner. It was the keen sense of the fact that none of these institutions had yet come anywhere near such complete readiness to do its work in the most efficient manner, and that the vigorous pushing of any scheme for separate theological seminaries would prolong too far the deficiency of abundant resources in such institutions, which gave emphasis to Dr. Fisk's recommendations. At such a time nobody would have rejoiced more warmly than Dr. Fisk in the establishment of theological seminaries endowed with the amplest resources to render them successful. When the writer was a student in the first Methodist theological school in New England, three of the four professors, Bishop Baker, Dr. John W. Merrill, and Dr. David Patten, had been trained in Dr. Fisk's theological class both at Wilbraham Academy and at Wesleyan University. They then thought themselves following out lines of work in which Wilbur Fisk would have been proud to have borne a vigorous share.

In 1833 Mr. Fisk introduced a resolution at the New England Conference in favor of the establishment of education societies. While this subject was under consideration, it became evident that the question could not be weighed with proper care and settled to universal acceptance unless it was examined in connection with the foreign missionary work of the church, for the missionary is necessarily an educator. Hence, at the session of the

New England Conference in 1834, the Missions Committee, of which Rev. John Lindsay was chairman, and the Education Committee, of which Wilbur Fisk was chairman, united in preparing their work, and the following report drawn by Dr. Fisk was presented as the report of both committees, and adopted by the conference: —

"It is evident from the signs of the times that the only embarrassment to the missionary cause, which threatens seriously to impede its progress amongst us, consists in the want of suitable men to carry it on. The mission work is peculiar in requiring an education for the particular work to which the missionary is called. We have already commenced the foreign missionary work, and calls are made upon us for the enlargement of these operations, in places where an acquaintance with other languages, and with some of the sciences, and with other professions, especially medicine, is indispensable. To suit these peculiarities, it is necessary that an education should be given of an appropriate character.

"Then another peculiarity of the missionary work is its identity with the cause of education. Education and the Christian religion always have been and always should be closely connected. A minister of the gospel that is not interested in the cause of education is an anomaly, and has forgotten an important part of his calling. But this applies with peculiar emphasis to the missionary work. Here not only must the missionary aid the cause collaterally and indirectly, but he must make it a part of his business, or, at least, he must superintend this work as performed by others, associated with him for that express purpose. Hence the missionary

must himself be prepared for the work of instruction, and in many cases must have associated with him missionary teachers, all of whom need to be educated for the purpose. Where shall we find the men qualified for this work? We find young people of both sexes ardent in piety, glowing in love to God and men, burning with a commendable zeal for missionary enterprise, but altogether unprepared to prosecute this work successfully. . . . It is also known that a great portion of these persons are poor, and unable to secure an education without aid. The committee have therefore agreed to report a plan, the general features of which, they are confident, will meet the exigencies of the church in this matter, if the members of the conference will enter into it with unanimity and zeal; and until some plan of this kind be adopted, the intellectual resources of the church will never be fully developed, and rendered, to the full extent, efficient and useful in the great cause of evangelizing the world. The youth of our church are diverted from the purposes of the church, either into business purely secular, or into the service and under the control of others, who offer them advantages for intellectual improvement and subsequent employment which they have sought for in vain among us. . . .

"Wesleyan University has strong claims upon the conference for patronage and support. But paying students are as profitable for the time being as money. If, therefore, the conference would provide funds for the purpose of education at the University, they will so far strengthen and aid the institution; and if they do this in connection with the missionary work, they will so far aid the cause of the church directly, and hence the cause of education and of religion will by the same operation be promoted."

To this argument was appended a resolution that a society should be formed whose purpose was to be, "to look up and bring forward such young persons as may be judged suitable for home or foreign missions, either as teachers or as preachers, and to furnish them with the means of an education suited to the peculiar duties to which they may be respectively called."

This report was at once adopted by the conference, and an agent was appointed to give an immediate and constant impulse to the work of the new society. So the new plan went into instant operation, and with such effect that at the ensuing session of the conference there were eight beneficiaries of the organization, — three at Middletown, and the others at Wilbraham Academy, — who were helped to the amount of from $85 to $100 each yearly.

This was the first of the education societies established by an annual conference in the Methodist Episcopal Church, — an example which was widely imitated by the other conferences, until in 1872 the entire church was directed to organize such societies by the action of the General Conference. Of this whole system Wilbur Fisk was the unquestioned originator, as he was its most effective advocate before the church. In 1888 these societies raised $47,000.

But while the students in attendance at Wesleyan University gathered rapidly around its rapidly growing faculty to the number of one hundred

and fifty-two, vigorous exertions were made to provide books and other facilities for successful and effective study, and for broad and efficient instruction. As early as 1837, it was the pleasure and honor of the authorities to say: —

"The philosophical and astronomical apparatus has been greatly enlarged the past year by an expenditure of about $4,000, and an increase of about one hundred instruments. Among them are a fine telescope, with a six-inch object-glass; a splendid plate electrical machine, with two plates of thirty-six inches in diameter; a magnificent altitude and azimuth instrument, so constructed as to be used also for meridian transits; an astronomical clock, and various others of the latest construction and the best quality. The entire apparatus is believed to be as good and useful, for the purposes of instruction, as any in the country.

"The advantages of the Department of Chemistry have been increased by a new laboratory and lecture-room."

Through gifts and purchases, the books in the libraries amounted to 10,000 well-selected volumes.

We have reserved to the last the discussion of the financial administration of Wesleyan University under Dr. Fisk's presidency. The valuation of the property of the institution, when it was opened for the reception of students, was $70,000; when Dr. Fisk died it was about $100,000; so that the funds of the institution grew by just $30,000 during the eight years of Dr. Fisk's presidency. The first charter of Wesleyan Univer-

sity authorized it "to possess estate not exceeding $200,000, excluding college buildings, library, and apparatus." In his private letters, and in his addresses on the subject, Dr. Fisk always speaks of this sum as the one which ought to be in the possession of the board of trustees, to enable them to respond fully to the claims made upon them in their work. Now, as it would have taken just a quarter of a century for the college to have gained that amount of endowment, it does not look as though the new institution was effectively solving the financial problem under the Fisk administration. But the truth is that almost all the additions to the college funds made between the beginning and the close of Fisk's career at Middletown were raised before he sailed for Europe in September, 1835, so that up to that date about $8,000 a year were added to the college property. Of course, this rate would have completed the full endowment of the college in about twenty-five years. It is probable that the latter estimate is the one to be used in any just estimate of the Fisk presidency. Of the justice of this we shall be convinced when we remember that, within six months of Dr. Fisk's return to America, the financial crisis of 1837 was in full blast. Says Mr. Schurz: —

"The first installment of the treasury surplus, amounting to $9,367,000, due on January 1, 1837, was taken from the deposit banks amid great agony, and transferred to the several states; also the second, about

April 1. But before the third fell due the general collapse came. First, the influx of capital from England ceased. The speculation, which had prevailed there during the same period, was brought to an end by financial embarrassment in the autumn of 1836. Discounts went up and prices down. Some banks were compelled to wind up, and three large business houses, which had been heavily engaged with America, failed. English creditors called in their dues. The manufacturing industries, which, carried along by the general whirl, had produced beyond demand, had to reduce their operations, and the price of cotton fell more rapidly than it had risen. In August, 1836, it had been from 15 to 20 cents a pound; in May, 1837, it was from 8 to 12. The cotton houses in the South went down. Nine tenths of the merchants of Mobile suspended. New Orleans was in a state of financial anarchy. Tobacco shared the fate of cotton. The whole South was bankrupt. . . . Fortunes in city lots disappeared overnight. The accumulated masses of imported merchandise shrank more than one third in their value. Stocks of all kinds dropped with a thump. Manufacturing establishments stopped. Tens of thousands of workingmen were thrown on the street. Bankruptcies were announced by scores, — by hundreds. Everybody was deeply in debt; and there was a terrible scarcity of available assets. The banks, being crippled by the difficulty in collecting their dues, and by the depreciation of the securities they held, could afford very little if any help. In May, 1837, while the preparatory steps for the distribution of the third surplus installment were in progress, the Dry Dock Bank of New York, one of the deposit banks, failed. Runs on other institutions followed;

and on May 10th the New York banks in a body suspended specie payment. — the effect of the surplus distribution act, and the heavy drafts for specie, being given as the principal causes. All the banks throughout the country then adopted the same course." [1]

It was no discredit to Dr. Fisk, or any other college president, if he was not able to make large additions to the funds of an educational institution during such a national crisis of panic and bankruptcy. The storm was still raging in its full intensity when Wilbur Fisk went to his grave in 1839. So small had been the accumulation of endowment funds at that period that Wilbur Fisk may be said to have carried out of the world the clear conviction that, if the church had a full perception of the urgent needs of the work of the college in the church and the world, not less than $200,000 would have found its way into the treasury of the University, and that very few of the members of the church were alive to this duty. It was one of the earthly anxieties that clung to the mind of the saintly Fisk most tenaciously in the parting scenes of earth, this noble and unselfish thoughtfulness about the necessities of the institutions of learning he had so dearly loved. The sharp strain of financial calamity was so intense as to render the last hours of Dr. Fisk gloomy and foreboding, but for a faith which no darkness could daunt. No unseen, angelic hands lifted the veil of uncertainty from the coming good

[1] *Henry Clay*, vol. ii. p. 126.

or evil fortunes of these institutions to comfort the dying eye of the noble president. He could only commit their fortunes as well as his own salvation into the loving hands of a faithful God. As he said himself in his last days: —

"Education must go hand in hand with religion, or the world will never be converted without a direct miracle from God. Our people will take good care of our other institutions, but I fear they are not sufficiently awake to the cause of education. Oh, if I could feel that our people — our brethren in the ministry — were alive to the interests of the University, how it would cheer my departure! But I leave it in the hands of a good God, who has blessed it beyond our most sanguine expectations, and I trust will continue to bless it for the good of the church and for his own glory." [1]

It was not until the year 1868 that the University funds were raised quite beyond the amount which the original charter authorized the trustees to hold, by the sudden subscription of $200,000 by Isaac Rich, of Boston, and Daniel Drew, of New York. It is necessary to go back a little in the history of Isaac Rich, in order to trace the influence of Wilbur Fisk in the great benefactions which at once lifted Wesleyan University to a broader and a richer existence. Isaac Rich was the young fish-peddler on Charlestown Bridge with whom the gifted preacher had made friends, had attracted to his own church, and had led into those paths of piety which were his own delight. In the

[1] Holdich's *Life*, p. 448.

phrase of the Old Testament Wilbur Fisk spoke to the heart of Isaac Rich. Soon this young man felt an intense desire to become a minister of the gospel, that he might turn sinners to holiness of life. Yet no prayer and no readiness to give up all other interests or pursuits for this purpose, ever brought him any conviction of a real vocation to the ministry. He felt dimly that his real calling was to business and commerce. It is more than probable that Rich was among those who attended the prayer-meetings held in the Methodist churches of Boston and Charlestown, to pray for young Fisk's restoration, to which Mr. Fisk himself attributed his recovery. Rich saw in Wilbur Fisk the kind of minister he would gladly have been had God so ordered it. Hence, when an untimely death cut short the career of Dr. Fisk, by nobody was his memory more warmly cherished than by Isaac Rich. He studied his life as described by Dr. Holdich; he read all that appeared in the public press concerning his favorite; he had many an anecdote to tell of Dr. Fisk to any comer; the portrait of Dr. Fisk, now in the library of Wesleyan University, was copied for Mr. Rich, and was the picture which greeted all eyes as they entered Mr. Rich's dwelling, and anything new about the great preacher was always welcome to his admirer down to the last day of his life. When child after child was taken away, and money accumulated in his hands beyond the boldest dreams of his boyhood, Mr. Rich felt a longing to connect his own name

with the work of Dr. Fisk, by gifts that should put the Academy and the University into a position to do under the best conditions the work which they had been doing under such embarrassing circumstances. If solicited to give to other objects, he would sometimes excuse himself a little curtly, because he wished to make as large gifts as possible for educational purposes. Once such a refusal so pained and shocked a saintly old lady, who had made application to him for help, that she could not believe she was talking with the real Isaac Rich.

"I was looking for Isaac Rich's office, sir."

"I am Isaac Rich."

"But there must be some mistake about it: you can't be the Mr. Rich I am looking for; he is a gentleman."

Her visible distress and her unintended sarcasm so cut Mr. Rich to the heart that the visitor got her money. This, then, was the man who in 1868 not only gave $100,000 himself to the college, but induced Daniel Drew to give a like sum. To Wesleyan University Mr. Rich gave in all about $150,000; to Wesleyan Academy about $50,000; and to Boston University what remained from an estate which was appraised at $1,600,000 at Mr. Rich's death, but had been shrunken by losses in the great fire, and by the rapid depreciation of real estate.

What a wonderful comfort would have attended the last days of Wilbur Fisk could he have foreseen that the total property held in trust for edu-

cational purposes in New England by Methodists would in the year 1887 amount to $3,520,000, and that the sum raised by the education societies, of which he was the first founder, should that same year amount to $47,000! It may be doubted whether he would regard the establishment of two universities with favor, but we cannot doubt that he would be charmed with the great work they have already accomplished, and yet more with the greater and better work they promise.

We have seen how careful Wilbur Fisk always was, both at Wilbraham and at Middletown, in all his personal intercourse with his students, to set an example of high devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to turn as many of them as he could into active Christians. How much he achieved in these ways can only be fully known "when men are judged out of the things written in the book." An early graduate of the college has told me this incident as an illustration of his fidelity and success in such wayside labors. He was in attendance on a prayer-meeting at the Methodist Episcopal Church at Middletown, where Dr. Fisk spoke briefly and affectingly of his personal trust in the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, when he closed with a sudden appeal to the manliness of the young people present to renounce the sins they confessed and deplored, and lead new lives. One student arose and said, "By the grace of God I will;" and he did.

But it was a sore grief to Dr. Fisk that he had been able to affect so little the spiritual condition

of the college. There was an intense longing in his devout soul that a revival of pure and undefiled religion might break out, and transform the religious condition of the college. There were plausible ways enough in which the thing might be explained by a cold and unbelieving heart. For one thing, Dr. Fisk himself was in an over-worked and jaded condition, so that any extra work he might undertake would make severe demands upon his time and strength. Yet when the pastor of the church, Rev. B. Creagh, in the spring of 1834, announced that a protracted meeting was to be held there, the announcement at once awakened the deepest interest in Dr. Fisk. The evening when the meeting was to begin he gathered his family about him for their customary devotions: his mind was full of the subject; he read an appropriate passage of the Scriptures, and spoke of his own spiritual condition, and the need of devotion to the new efforts to be put forth in the local church. He said: "I have never labored so long anywhere as here without special evidence that God owned my labors by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. Can it be that by this God means to indicate that I am not in the path of duty? I do not feel that my own soul has lost any of its fervor; but the University, — the souls in the University!"

Then he poured forth such a prayer as only such a soul can pour forth when deeply moved and melted under the gracious breath of the Holy Comforter. Fearing lest the All-seeing Eye might

find some taint of unhallowed motive in his profound earnestness for the salvation of souls, he was heard to say: "I ask not to be made the honored instrument; only give me a token that thou dost own the University." He gave himself up freely to the needful labors of a great spiritual harvest season. Then, God who knew the purity of his servant's heart and the integrity of his motives, gave him his heart's desire. The following is Dr. Fisk's account of the revival, in the "Christian Advocate and Journal:" —

"WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, *March* 12, 1834.

"DEAR BRETHREN, — I have the inexpressible happiness of communicating to you the cheering intelligence of a blessed work of grace in Wesleyan University. This is the first general revival we have had since the institution was opened. Although we have had a great proportion of pious students from the beginning, still those who entered in an unconverted state have generally continued so, and in some instances the piety of the professing students had evidently declined. This was to us a matter of great grief and of special solicitude. The University was established for the good of the world by the church, and especially for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause; and to experience no spiritual refreshing for more than two years, seemed peculiarly inauspicious. The young men were moral, regular in their habits, remarkably correct in their general deportment, active in the cause of temperance, of missions, and of other benevolent enterprises; but all this, commendable as it was, did not come up to the important standard, personal holiness of heart and life. But God

had not forgotten us. He has at length visited us in great mercy. A few students are absent. Of those that are present, but very few, perhaps but three or four, can be found who profess not to have found peace in believing, or are not earnestly pressing after it. The work in most cases seems to be thorough and deep. So great has been the interest for the past two weeks, we have been obliged partially, and some days almost wholly, to suspend our regular college duties, and our college edifices have resounded with the voice of prayer and praise.

"Although all that are acquainted with our literary institutions know that here, as elsewhere, there are snares and temptations for inexperienced youth, — so that we rejoice with trembling, — yet I cannot but believe that a goodly number of young men have here, within a few days, been brought to a state of feeling and a course of action that will be productive of lasting advantage to themselves, and through them to others. What an interesting consideration is this! and how strongly does it recommend our literary institutions to the care of the church! This is a point to which I strongly suspect the attention of the church has not been sufficiently directed. Let one fact speak on that subject. To say nothing of the advantages of our seminaries for those who are already pious, and of the moral and religious influence that has been thrown over others, I have the means of knowing that about three sevenths of all the students of the University have become pious, either here or at one of our academies, before they entered here. Thus religion and literature have met together — in which there is the greatest hope for the cause of God — in young men who are training and girding themselves

for the great enterprise of subduing the world to Christ. And will our friends look on and see our institutions languish for want of the necessary funds, when God is showering salvation upon them? And will our pious members hesitate to send their children here for fear of injury to their souls? Brethren, inquire what is duty in this matter.

"The work in the University has been in connection with a gracious revival in the town. W. FISK."

That this was no transient mood with him appears from Dr. Holdich's words: —

"In the spring of 1837 the Methodist congregation in Middletown, under the pastoral care of Rev. C. K. True, was favored with a blessed work of grace in which the University largely participated. In this work Dr. Fisk was deeply interested, and seldom appeared to greater advantage. He labored diligently and efficiently. It was delightful to see him, as the students came forward for prayers, singing, praying, and conversing with them, solely intent on leading them to the 'Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.'

"The character of his preaching was remarkably appropriate and evangelical. Divested of the stately forms of art, it was delivered with all that 'simplicity, dignity, and directness' that indicate a pure solicitude for the triumph of truth. But then, conscious of the high import of his message, he threw into his sermons all his mental power and resources. He selected for his themes the more familiar points of the evangelic plan, and with evident painstaking labored to bring them home to the understanding and the heart. Two very common faults of the pulpit he thus avoided: one is, the selection

of topics so remotely connected with personal piety as to leave the conscience of the hearer untouched, and his feelings unstirred; the other is, discussing more familiar themes in a manner so indifferent, and with such little effort of mind, and variety of thought and illustration, as to create an impression that the speaker is not interested in his own peculiar business. If he treated of the doctrine of repentance, or faith, or regeneration, it was with a clearness of statement, an amplitude of scriptural illustration, that exhibited at once the experienced Christian and the able theologian." [1]

At some points the educational work of Dr. Fisk was noteworthy. It was remarkable that there should have been no religious test imposed on any officer of the college. The unusual stress put upon the acquisition of the modern languages, as an important element in the highest culture, showed breadth and independence of judgment. As long as he lived, modern languages held almost as great a place in the course of study as the ancient. Yet Professor Whedon, the teacher of the ancient languages under Dr. Fisk, declares that he prized the ancient languages so highly that he would gladly, had circumstances permitted, have been their devotee.

The slight esteem for the fine arts exhibited in Dr. Fisk's Inaugural is its weakest point. But how should a man of his circumstances and training find the path to broader views? In this respect, Dr. Fisk's European tour disposed forever of all such narrow ideas.

[1] Holdich's *Life of Wilbur Fisk*, p. 393.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEMPERANCE REFORMER.

How great room there was for the Temperance Reformation may be shown in a hundred ways, but perhaps nowhere better or more vividly than in Lyman Beecher's Autobiography: —

"Soon after my arrival at Litchfield, I was called to attend the ordination at Plymouth of Mr. Heart. . . . Well, at the ordination at Plymouth, the preparation for our creature comforts, in the sitting-room of Mr. Heart's house, besides food, was a broad side-board covered with decanters and bottles, and sugar, besides pitchers of water. There we found all the various kinds of liquor then in vogue. The drinking was apparently universal. This preparation was made by the society as a matter of course. When the Consociation arrived, they always took something to drink round; also before public services, and always on their return. As they could not all drink at once, they were obliged to stand and wait, as people do at a mill.

"There was a decanter of spirits, also, on the dining-table, to help digestion, and gentlemen partook of it through the afternoon and evening as they felt the need, some more, some less; and the side-board, with the spillings of water, and sugar, and liquor, looked and smelled like the bar of a very active grogshop. None of the

Consociation were drunk; but that there was not, at times, a considerable amount of exhilaration, I cannot affirm.

"When they had all done drinking, and had pipes and tobacco, in less than fifteen minutes there was such a smoke you could not see. And the noise I cannot describe; it was the maximum of hilarity. They told their stories, and were at the height of jocose talk. . . . I think I remember some animadversions were made at that time on the amount of liquor drunk, for the tide was swelling in the drinking habits of society.

"The next ordination was that of Mr. Harvey, in Goshen, and there was the same preparation and the same scenes acted over, and then afterward still louder murmurs from the society at the quantity and expense of liquor consumed."

This was the beginning of the temperance reform in the righteous and indignant soul of Lyman Beecher, and marked a new era in the morals of New England. These revolting spectacles stirred up his pure mind to secure, first, a moral revolution in the drinking habits of the clergy and church members. It was his manly and resolute protest against the convivial habits of those days which gave the first great impulse to the temperance reform. Mr. Beecher has himself recorded the painful circumstances which led him to prepare the famous "Six Sermons on Intemperance." His first male convert after he went to Litchfield had gradually been ensnared in the vice of drunkenness. And to make the matter as bad as possible, the young man's father was entangled in the same

corrupting habit. It was in the agony of a true and loving pastor's heart under these disheartening discoveries that that stern and remorseless indictment of the rum-drinking habits of New England was written. The so-called "standing order" had no monopoly of such weaknesses, wickedness, and misery. The other churches had the same ceaseless fight to wage against the same unsleeping foe. They, too, saw all their Christian zeal and love exerted in vain to save the brightest and noblest of their converts from a drunkard's grave. These painful incidents were sure to affect most deeply the Christian ministry as a body, and especially those ministers whose faith in the renovating and transforming power of the Gospel of Christ was most vivid and potent. As Wilbur Fisk had become better acquainted with the moral condition of the country at large, he must have realized keenly how great an obstacle the habit of using ardent spirits as a beverage, and as a special promoter of hospitality, everywhere opposed to keeping public morals up to any point once attained, not to mention its paralyzing effect on efforts to raise them to a purer, nobler plane. When he asked himself honestly about the actual moral standard of the Methodist Church, the answer was an apparently comfortable one. Wesley's faithful words of warning and rebuke were still proclaimed, still gave inspiration to the public action of the conferences, whether general or annual, which had any occasion to deal with the subject, and enforced, with all the

weight of his apostolic authority, the faithful teachings of the itinerant clergy. But when faithful pastors asked themselves how safe their folds in reality were from the devouring wolves of intemperance, the truth was sometimes startling enough. For gradually had custom won a sort of implied toleration for all the most abhorred features of the trade in ardent spirits, not only in the public mind, but even in the bosom of the churches. The member or minister of any church, who fancied his own body especially secure against the invasion of such vices, was sure to be startled out of his unreal safety by the sudden fall and irretrievable ruin of some dearly loved Christian friend. This experience soon befell Mr. Fisk. One of the members of the Wilbraham Methodist Church, a trustee of Wesleyan Academy, a cordial friend, owned a distillery. He carried on a large business in the products of the distillery, and used them so freely himself as greatly to alarm his dearest friends. But as the discipline of the church, relaxing its former stringency, only prohibited "drunkenness, or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of necessity," it was not a clearly defined case of violation of church law. And as every man had to be his own judge, at first, how far his own indulgences were "cases of necessity," it often happened that church members were in danger of getting irretrievably involved in intemperate habits before any courageous warning had been sounded. For years this had been the most frequent cause of

backslidings, compelling excision from the church. From careful investigations, Mr. Fisk had learned that this dreadful sin and peril, not confined to New England Methodism, were especially notorious in the West and South. He soon saw that the only possible safety for the Methodist Church was to make all her legislation and administration conform to the highest standards of the Bible. It was fortunate in this case that the first legislation of the church needed only to be amended by prohibiting also the manufacture of ardent spirits, to bring it up to the scriptural standard. To bring about this new order of things, Dr. Fisk began by preaching and lecturing on temperance wherever he had an opportunity. To the full extent of his strength he accepted invitations to speak out the full and earnest convictions to which he had come. He aided in the organization of local temperance societies, helped to obtain and circulate temperance information, and sent letters to newspapers to help on the great movement.

To the surprise and sorrow of Mr. Fisk, he sometimes found sharp opposition, where he least expected it, in the very bosom of the church itself. When on his way to lecture in a Connecticut town, he encountered a member of the church who tried to persuade him to throw up the engagement to lecture, because the local church was not in favor of temperance, because some of its members traded in liquor, and because the Methodist society there would be divided if the lecturer persisted. Said

the inflexible advocate of gospel temperance, "*Sir, if the church stands on rum, let it go!*" The fidelity and wisdom with which the new reform was carried forward, under such skillful and brave leadership, were such that the New England conferences were speedily enlisted almost to a man in the good cause. Mr. Fisk was ready at all times to use his pen to recommend the reform to all Methodists. His sagacious leadership was recognized far and near, so that suggestions, information, and congratulations flowed in to him from all quarters in the church. There were some who challenged his views, and some did not fear to impugn his motives in stirring up this temperance crusade. He showed his gift for real leadership in the skillful way wherewith he won over to the movement those who could most effectively help it. He knew that the "Christian Advocate," under the care of the Rev. Nathan Bangs, D. D., could reach the most influential minds in the church; for it had fifteen thousand subscribers. Hence he endeavored to commit Mr. Bangs to the new reform. But at first, to the keen disappointment and grief of Dr. Fisk, the paper pronounced against the temperance movement and societies as not called for, and possibly mischievous. A camp-meeting held at Somers, Conn., adopted a series of resolutions recommending the formation of temperance societies, which was forwarded to the "Christian Advocate" for publication. The resolutions were explained and enforced by remarks from Dr. Fisk.

The "Advocate" retained a hostile attitude for some months longer. But meanwhile it happily turned out that Dr. Bangs had failed to convince himself of the rightfulness of his own ideas, and while men were planning to obtain a hearing for conferences which had been refused individual members thereof, the veteran leader not only carried his own conference, the New York, into the temperance ranks, but made the newspaper which he controlled a great help to the reformers. This conversion was very largely due to Wilbur Fisk, and his recognition of the value of Dr. Bangs's help was very prompt and generous. Finding those opposed to these new views somewhat reluctant to yield, Dr. Fisk issued in 1832 an "Address to the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the Subject of Temperance."

This begins with the declaration that "many in the visible church are actually standing in the way of sinners, and are hindrances to the work of God." He thinks it an urgent duty of the church to remove her stumbling-blocks of all sorts from the paths of sinners. While there are many such stumbling-stones to be taken away, he for this occasion confines himself to one, "the use and sale of ardent spirits by the members of the Church of Christ." He renounces declamation on this topic, but tells us that ardent spirits then cost the nation, directly or indirectly, ninety-four millions of dollars yearly. He says it is admitted that three fourths the crime and three fourths the pauper-

ism of the nation come from this cause. He does not describe the wretchedness caused by rum in the homes of men, because "*you have seen the drunkard, and you have seen his family.*"

The really grave point is, that "the same train of means and causes that have produced the intemperate of the past and present are still in operation to produce an equal or greater proportion in the next generation, and so on forever." Then comes a solemn declaration that the church was aiding and abetting this dreadful work of death. "Do not many of her members use ardent spirits? Do they not traffic in the accursed thing? Do they not hold out on their signs invitations to all that pass by to come and purchase of them the dreadful poison?" What makes rum-drinking tolerated at all in general society is the example of the good and pious men who use strong drink with moderation. To the plea that temperate drinking only sanctions the temperate, not the intemperate, use of rum, he responds: "It is the *certain* cause, and will be the certain cause as long as moderate drinking and the sale of strong drink are tolerated." He pleads: "Do not pass over this conclusion lightly. Look at it, pray over it; go to your closet, and with your eyes raised to heaven, and your finger on Rom. xiv. 21 ['It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak'], justify yourself before God if you can. Do not say it does you good, and there-

fore you must use it. God knows, and you might know, that it does you no good. I say you *might* know; for the experiment is easily made. Just leave off the use for one year, and try it for yourself. Thousands have done so, and have found that they were better without than with it. Do you hesitate? then you already love it. Yes, reluctant as you may be to own it even to yourself, *you love rum.* And you have need to leave it off for your own safety; for there is but a step between you and ruin. Oh, my brother, put down that cup quickly! It will burn up thy life, and kindle up in thy soul the fire that is never quenched." His words kindle into a flame of anger over any petty, personal advantage of comfort or of gain to the ruin of human souls.

"The man who makes a common use of ardent spirits, if he has received grace, becomes thereby stupid and undevout, and if he is unregenerate he is almost impervious to the shafts of truth. 'Rum,' said a brother in the ministry, 'is a *non-conductor* to religious truth;' and he then added, in an emphasis that caused his words to thrill through my whole frame like the death chime of souls, '*Drinking rum and going to hell are synonymous terms.*'"

He strikes dead with one indignant thrust of his blade the pleas of those who cry out "priestcraft," "union of church and state," sectarianism, the boasters of their own independence, the time-server, and the indolent. All such are found among the opponents of total abstinence as the only

sure and effectual cure for all the woes and injuries of intemperance. The only real obstruction the good cause has so far met has been the refusal to make total abstinence the rallying cry of all temperance men. Were that once done, success would be swift and complete. In this eventful moment of the conflict with the evil, Dr. Fisk described it in these solemn words: —

"The chief cause of all this obstruction is to be traced to the church. We expected infidels, and rumsellers, and selfish men would scoff and oppose; but against them we expected to array the enlightened statesman, the philanthropic citizen, and, above all, the great body of the church. But it has not been so. Christians of various denominations are strengthening the hands of the wicked. And is our own church clear? Let the truth be told to our shame: in spite of our excellent rules on the subject; in spite of the writings of Mr. Wesley; in spite of the worthy example of the greater portion of our members, — in almost every place I visit or hear from, and I have made much inquiry on this point, some Methodists are found who drink and deal in ardent spirits! Now all this they do in the full blaze of the light that has been poured upon this subject. It is this, therefore, that has led me to say the woe, the curse of the Almighty, is out against such. The responsibility of the church on this subject is great. If church members drink and sell, and the church countenances them in it, in vain may we look for victory; the reformation is effectually stayed. When was it ever known that the community at large carried a question of morals beyond the church? . . . Nay, I am not sure that this

question does not now depend mainly on the Methodist Church."

In this critical hour in the fortunes of the reform and the destinies of the church, Dr. Fisk urges every Methodist to give up the use of strong drink. "Let the waving banner of our church have inscribed on it, in large capitals, ENTIRE ABSTINENCE! and to this principle let every member pledge perpetual fidelity." Secondly, he would have them abandon altogether the traffic in liquor in all its branches: —

"My Christian brother, if you saw this trade as God sees it, you would sooner beg your bread from door to door than gain money by such a traffic. The Christian's dram-shop! Sound it to yourself. How does it strike your ear? It is doubtless a choice gem in the phrase-book of Satan. But how paradoxical! How shocking to the ear of the Christian! How offensive to the ear of Deity. Why, the dram-shop is the recruiting rendezvous of hell! And shall a Christian be the recruiting officer? Above all things should no Methodist manufacture ardent spirits, since these are the mainsprings of the terrible traffic, 'poisoners-general' of the public."

Should any refuse, after the most loving and painstaking instruction and warning, he would have them all excluded, with the formal disciplinary processes, from membership in the church. For he does not regard practices such as he has been denouncing as legally screened by the exempting clause, "except in cases of necessity."

The original rule of Mr. Wesley, lately published in the "Advocate," would be better; but, until we can get that, let us come up to the fair construction of our present rule.

He urges Methodist preachers to enlighten the church and the world by frequent sermons, and through private conversation to persuade any that are slow to yield. He is sure, that if they all work in unison, they will bring about a universal triumph in America. To people who say: "I have been a member of a temperance society ever since I was a member of the Methodist Church. Why should I join another?" Dr. Fisk gives the cogent reason: —

"First, then, if you are already a member of a temperance society, embracing all that is embraced in these societies, you can have no objection certainly to joining another. It is no matter to how many such societies you belong, if you do good thereby. Again, however gratified we might be, as Methodists, to have others come up and join our church, and thus coöperate with us in the temperance cause, and all other objects that we, as a church, may wish to accomplish, yet we know that many will not do this; but if we will relax a little from the pride of our *ecclesiastical caste*, and combine with them in opposition to intemperance, we may in this way unite moral men of all religions, and of no particular religion, in this enterprise. Thus we shall strengthen and encourage them in a good cause, and they will aid us in establishing principles which you say you have long since espoused and vindicated."

To the end of his life Dr. Fisk retained the keenest interest in this good cause, so that he was ready to travel, to lecture on every phase of the measure, to encourage the formation of local temperance societies made up of all who would join them, conference temperance societies, and organizations to prepare and put into circulation temperance literature covering every side of the question. In May, 1833, he made an address, which made a very marked impression, which was his first formal publication on the topic. Dr. Holdich says: —

"In May, 1833, he delivered his celebrated address on the nature of the traffic in ardent spirits. This branch of the subject was almost new. The consumers of the article were the principal objects of attack, while the manufacturers and venders were but little disturbed. An inquiry into the morality of the trade, therefore, was not only novel, it was bold, evincing no slight share of moral courage. It was fortunate for him and the cause that his mode of presenting the subject was so clear and dispassionate. He selected his ground with great skill, laid down his premises fairly and distinctly, and deduced his conclusions so justly that few would be likely to controvert them. This done, his close, searching, powerful appeals carried home with them a mighty force, and yet they could scarcely give offense."

So effective was Mr. Fisk's agitation in behalf of a vigorous administration of the existing law, and so scriptural and overwhelming were the arguments adduced in behalf of a change in the law

itself, that he had not been three months in his grave when the General Conference shaped its legislation on temperance as follows: —

"*Question.* What directions shall be given concerning the sale and use of spirituous liquors?

"*Answer.* If any member of our society retail or give spirituous liquors, and anything disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall proceed against him as in the case of other immoralities, and the person accused shall be cleared, censured, suspended, or excluded, according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality."

To Wilbur Fisk more than to any other man is due the credit of this change in the letter of the law, and the far greater change in the spirit in which the rule was administered, which has since pervaded the whole church.

CHAPTER IX.

SLAVERY.

In January, 1835, Dr. Fisk was informed by the editor of "Zion's Herald" that the paper was to be opened for the discussion of the slavery question, and he was invited to bear a part in the debate. So far Mr. Fisk had held aloof from the contention, because he thought the ultra doctrines of the new movement likely to have pernicious consequences in church and state. He saw that the partisans of the new measures hoped to create a popular effervescence which would be unfavorable to the judicial and fraternal spirit essential to the wisest settlement of so grave a question, with all its complicated social and political relations. Hence he meant to keep silent.

Meanwhile the Rev. George Storrs, a leading Methodist anti-slavery agitator, took Dr. Fisk's address on temperance, and changed it into an anti-slavery document by putting in brackets after the words used by the author others necessary to give the document an anti-slavery squint. Against this "unauthorized transformation" Mr. Fisk printed a spirited protest in "Zion's Herald;" but finding neither Mr. Storrs nor his friends disposed

to apologize, he embodied his views in the following cool, keen, but Christian letter to the "Herald:" —

"MR. EDITOR, — I am sorry to notice that both Brother Storrs and his friends for him persist in maintaining the propriety of his course in respect to the metamorphosis of my temperance address. If Brother Storrs really feels, after a fair review of the subject, that he is justified in that course, and if he also justifies the personal reflections which have been thrown out in the paper of which he is a principal proprietor, in reference to my disclaimer, I can only say he does not view the subject as I view it, or as most of those whose opinions I have heard and read on the subject. Brother Storrs may rest assured, however, that my Christian regards toward him are the same as ever, because I believe the error the effect of an honest zeal, which is *not according to knowledge.*

"Brother Storrs is hereby further assured that I do not consider the offense of so high a character as seems to have been attributed to it by some of the public periodicals. He did not say the abolition sentiments were mine. It is true, those who did not know my sentitiments on abolition would, if I had not disclaimed it, naturally have supposed that I consented to such a use of my composition, especially as Brother Storrs did not inform the public that I had not consented to it, nor yet that I was *not* a modern abolitionist. I do not, however, in my reply, accuse him of *designing* to represent me as an abolitionist, and I regret to see that design attributed to him. I know him too well to believe he would knowingly misrepresent the opinions of another,

or take what he believed to be improper means to propagate his own opinions; and I *thought* I knew him well enough to believe that, when his attention was recalled to a step improper in itself, he would see it and retract. But if I was mistaken in this, I have nothing more to say on that point: the public have my views.

"W. FISK."

This was one of those subjects that was not to be kept back by any amount of self-restraint, candor, or tact on the part of the conservatives. Despite himself, there were few subjects that occupied Dr. Fisk's thoughts more largely than this; and rarely has he been worse misunderstood than on this question. While he was yet alive he complained sadly that he was called a pro-slavery man, an apologist for slavery, and a champion of oppression. This evil fame he bears to-day, so that his conduct must be discriminatingly weighed.

On December 19, 1834, "An Appeal to the Members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church" was published in Boston, signed by Shipley W. Willson, Abram D. Merrill, Le Roy Sunderland, George Storrs, and Jared Perkins. The subject of the appeal was slavery. The aim of the document was not only to speak of the wrongs of the needy and helpless slave, but also for the Methodist Episcopal Church. "We feel that we should prove ourselves utterly unfit for the relation we sustain to the church, either as members or ministers, were we longer to keep silence and

do nothing to avert the dreadful evils with which slavery threatens so evidently her peace and prosperity. We cannot look on with indifference and see some of the plainest rules of her discipline outraged and set at defiance." After a summary view of the evils of slavery they say: —

"Hence we say the system is wrong, it is cruel and unjust in all its parts and principles, and that no Christian can consistently lend his influence or example for one moment in support of it, and consequently it should be abandoned now and forever."

But so far is this from being so that —

"Hundreds of her ministers and thousands of her members are enslavers of their fellow-men, as they have been for years. They hold the bodies and souls of men, women, and children — many of whom are members of the same church with themselves — in abject slavery, and still retain their standing without any censure on this account. Nay, the 'Christian Advocate and Journal,' the official organ of the church, apologizes for the crimes of the enslaver of the human species, and attempts to justify the system."

Against this course they quote these Scriptures: —

"And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (Exodus xxi. 16). "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him, then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you" (Deut. xxiv. 7). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy-

self" (Matt. xxii. 39). "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" (Matt. vii. 12). "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col. iv. 1). "Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called. Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man. Likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. vii. 20–23).

Various comments are made on these passages of the Bible, of which the essential ones, as bearing on the duty of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are, first, "that a certain kind of servitude was permitted by the Jewish economy;" and, second, "that two things are apparent: first, that Christianity does not alter the civil connection which one man may sustain to another, merely by his embracing it. Secondly, slavery is here condemned, inasmuch as the apostle commands such as were slaves to use the first opportunity which might be afforded them for obtaining their liberty."

The address analyzes the rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church on slavery as follows: —

"1. Slavery is 'a great evil,' and we declare that we are 'as much as ever convinced of it.'

"2. No 'enslaver of men, women, or children' is 'truly awakened,' and hence he cannot have a sincere 'desire to flee from the wrath to come' (Dis. ch. xi. sec. 1).

"3. No 'enslaver of men, women, or children' can be received or continued a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Dis., ch. xi. sec. 1).

"4. Traveling preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church may become enslavers of men, women, or children in those States where the laws will not admit of their giving their slaves their freedom after they have bought them."

Quoting provisions made in the General Conference of 1804 to protect the purity of the church by requiring the ministry to converse freely and faithfully with slave-holders desiring to become members of the church about the sinfulness of slavery, and compelling manumission when the laws would permit, a great point is made over the words: "Nevertheless the members of our societies in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee shall be exempted from the operation of the above rules."

"But what changed the nature of this 'great evil in the States of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee? Yearly the church is becoming more deeply involved, for 'the general minutes of our annual conferences announce eighty thousand colored members in our church; . . . but what proportion of these and others are enslaved by the Methodist members and preachers, we have no means of determining."

The address asks what are the opinions of Wesley, Adam Clarke, and Richard Watson, and the English Wesleyan Conference, on such a state of things in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Then comes a long and impressive citation from Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery," which fails to show either that Wesley did think that slave-holders were never admitted to the fellowship of the apostolic churches, or that he had ever made slave-holding a ground of exclusion from the sacrament when he was pastor of a church at Savannah in a slave-holding community, or in the discipline of his societies in slave-holding countries, like the West Indies or the Southern States.

From Adam Clarke they produce this declaration: "In heathen countries slavery is in some sense excusable; among Christians it is an enormity and a crime for which perdition hardly is an adequate state of punishment," — a statement whose white heat is no less manifest than its failure to cover the point at issue.

From Richard Watson they cite resolutions presented by him at the English Wesleyan Conference, when the cause of West Indian emancipation was on the verge of its complete victory in the British Parliament. The resolutions are a solemn and impressive statement of the moral and religious grounds on which the conference desired to see West Indian slavery abolished, ending with the recommendation that Wesleyan petitions and votes should be used for the overthrow of slavery. These are all the authorities. The address concludes with three recommendations: —

"1. These evils have come upon us while we have been sleeping and dreaming of prosperity; and so we

have been resting unconscious of any danger, until the horrid monster has insinuated himself into the church of God, and blighted her fairest prospects with his pestiferous breath. And how can we be faithful to our solemn trust without informing ourselves upon this momentous subject?

"2. God himself commands us to 'remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body' (Heb. xiii. 3).

"3. If, as we trust it has been made fully to appear, slavery is one general system of violence, robbery, injustice, vice, and oppression, then it is a sin in the sight of Heaven, and ought to cease at once, now and forever. But mark us here. We would have their situation one which would secure to them, by adequate and impartially administered laws, the right of enjoying the fruit of their own labor, and the right of obtaining secular and religious education."

The reason why the signers of this document resorted to this publication was because the papers of the church were not open to them.

On the 27th of March, 1835, was issued a "Counter Appeal," addressed to the same parties, signed by W. Fisk, John Lindsey, Bartholomew Otheman, Hezekiah S. Ramsdell, Edward T. Taylor, Abel Stevens, Jacob Sanborn, and E. H. White.

It is evident enough that this document, notwithstanding the number of names signed to it, proceeds from the pen of Dr. Fisk, so that we

shall analyze it as the embodiment of his personal views. Of the "Appeal" it is asserted: —

"Against that publication, fraught as it is with doctrines radically erroneous; arraigning as it does the fathers, the discipline, and the institutions of our church; and productive, as we fear it must be, of consequences deeply injurious to the holy cause in which the affections and powers of our souls are engaged, — we firmly declare our dissent, and earnestly enter our protest."

After an earnest appeal to all parties engaged in the discussion to exhibit candor, fair-mindedness, and a truth-loving spirit, the paper continues: —

"With regard to their theoretic view of slavery, the following sentence appears to convey the most concise and explicit expression: 'We say the system is wrong, it is cruel and unjust in all its parts and principles, and that no Christian can consistently lend his influence or example for one moment in support of it, and consequently it should be abandoned now and forever.' This general proposition has, like many other of the broad maxims used by the advocates of our brethren's views, the merit at once of a simple conciseness and sweeping comprehensiveness, which, however convenient for splendid declamation, even the authors find somewhat embarrassing when they are to be applied to practical operations. . . . We understand it as declaring that no *part* of the system is just or humane, that no Christian can consistently support any part of it, and that the whole should be this moment abandoned. From other parts of the 'Appeal' we also understand them to maintain

that they consider the doctrine of our disciplinary General Rule, to which they have as Methodists given their consent, is, that no slave-holder is truly awakened, and that therefore no slave-holder can rightly be permitted a place in the Christian church. On this issue appeal is made to Scripture, the discipline of the church, the authorities brought forward in the 'Appeal' itself, a criticism of the measures presented is offered, and a better method heralded.

"The argument of the 'Appeal' founded on Old Testament usages is neglected, because the New Testament is such an immense advance on the Old that no thoughtful Christian would wish to accept any other than New Testament grounds for his behavior on such important matters. How the spirit of the gospel bears upon the relations of men to each other may be seen in the commands: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' and 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'

"From these two simple texts results the rule: Nobody has the right to remove any providential evil upon himself by imposing a still greater evil upon another. Whatever be the nature of any evil imposed by Providence upon me, — loss of health, of liberty, or of life, — if I love my neighbor as myself, I shall continue that endurance rather than relieve myself by the infliction of a greater evil upon another. If any class of men to which I belong, by any dispensation of God, by birth or otherwise, shall be placed in any circumstances of unhappiness, of whatever kind, they are bound by the authority of the Golden Rule to continue that state of unhappiness, so long as it can be removed only by imposing a still greater amount of unhappiness upon society at large. . . .

"Applying this same reasoning to the specific case of slavery, we should not be justified in revolutionizing its position unless we had rational grounds to believe that such a process would add to the sum of happiness. . . . The results may be stated thus: 1. The authority of the master should terminate so soon as its termination would not produce more evils than would its longer continuance; and, second, this authority should be diminished in amount and severity when such diminution would not produce more evil than it would subtract. . . .

"And it may be well here to remark the fallacy which both our brethren and others use when arguing the morality of this question; in founding their reasoning, not upon the relation itself, nor upon what that relation would be in the hands of a truly Christian master, but upon extreme cases of licentiousness and cruel abuse of that relation in the hands of a tyrant. Supposing the case of a Christian necessitated to hold men in the relation of slaves, such would be the proper influence of religion that, though the form of slavery might remain, its infamies and its miseries would cease. When, therefore, our brethren and others portray the horrors of cruelty and abomination exercised by tyrannical and cruel masters, carrying out the specific statements with all the exactness of physical detail, and ask us if those barbarities are for a moment exercisable by a Christian, or justifiable by Scripture, we readily answer, *certainly not.* It is as certain that abuses of the master's authority are not for a moment justifiable as that its existence in some circumstances is.

"Our brethren favor us with an exegesis upon two texts which appear in our view somewhat unmanageable in their hands. Between text and commentary there

appears to be a fair combat; and as they come to no compromise, it is unnecessary to say which comes off with the mastery. To illustrate the justice of our strictures, we shall give their entire exegesis of the first, prefixing, however, to the verse they quote, the four preceding verses, which they choose to omit. We include their text and commentary in quotations.

"'Servants [slaves] obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons' (Col. iii. 22–25). 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven' (Col. iv. 1). 'This text alone, were it properly obeyed, would annihilate the system of slavery from the church and nation. And is it just and equal when the poor slaves are compelled, often by the stroke of the club or cowhide, to toil in weariness and want as long as they live, till they finally drop into the grave without their ever being paid a penny?'

"The question asks, with the most ingenuous simplicity, whether the most tyrannic cruelty be equity and justice? We as ingenuously answer, we opine not, just as two and two are not five.

"'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called, being a servant? Care not for it: but if thou mayest be free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called,

being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men' (1 Cor. vii. 20–23).

"Our brethren say, 'From this, two things are apparent: first, that Christianity does not alter the civil connection which one man may sustain to another merely by his embracing it.' The writer in this simple sentence concedes the whole question, and gives up the whole point. Is not the relation of a master to a slave a 'civil connection,' and will not Christianity, 'merely upon his embracing it,' dissolve that connection? If not, then religion and slavery can exist together, and the dispute is at an end. Our brethren grant more than we can accept. If embracing Christianity alters no civil relation, slavery, for aught religion does, may become perpetual; and thus the whole is conceded which the most inveterate slave-holder can desire. From such a liberality of concession we beg to be excused."

In favor of his view of the subject, Dr. Fisk cites passages which the "Appeal" neglects to quote, as though they "were given up in honest despair as impregnable to assault, and inflexible to perversion."

"'Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ. Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to man; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing

threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him' (Eph. vi. 5–9).

"'Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted [boxed or cuffed on the ear] for your faults, ye take it patiently?' (1 Pet. ii. 18, 19.)

"'Let as many servants [slaves] as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful, and beloved, and partakers of the benefit. These things exhort and teach. If any man think otherwise . . . he is proud, knowing nothing' (1 Tim. vi. 1, 2, etc.).

"These passages are brought to show that in the primitive church, under the apostolic eye, and with apostolic sanction, the relation of master and slave was permitted to subsist."

Dr. Fisk sums up the discussion of the attitude of the New Testament to slavery in these statements: —

"1. The relation of master and slave was a tolerated relation.

"2. Christianity pronounces all men alike immortal, responsible, and precious in God's eyes. Hence it does attest the innate ascendency of his nature, by which he must inevitably rise above this fictitious and unnatural

position of a mere chattel into an elevation worthy of his true character.

"3. The letter of the golden rule and the spirit of the gospel operate with an irresistible tendency to the amelioration, diminution, and destruction of slavery as a system; holding forth its perpetuation as an abomination; and its continuance, by the authors of legislation, beyond the time of its practical removal, *a sin.*"

After showing that Christianity was diffused under the influence of political institutions which recognized slavery as a normal part of the civil order, Dr. Fisk shows that its attitude to existing evils was a guarded one: —

"It is thus historically evident, that the apostles preached the gospel to every creature under heaven, — in the palace of the master, if accessible; in the hovel of the slave, if permitted; nor did they permit themselves to endanger the lives and safety of society by a reckless carelessness of results: nor did they preclude the possibility of preaching to the slave by uncompromising injunctions of emancipation upon the master."

Upon this model, the discipline and the administration of the church of our fathers have been modeled in respect to slavery. Instead of excusing that course, he exults in it; for he says: —

"The spirit of our ministering brethren in the South has borne the impress of the primitive type. They, like the early apostles, are a small minority, beneath a government (though nominally Christian) which has slavery constructed into its fabric, and is held by rulers who

have the will and the power to pass oppressive laws, which mercy does indeed weep to see inflicted. It is no more necessary to defend that wicked system of legislation, in order to justify the cause of our brethren, than it is necessary to vindicate the Roman government in order to justify the course adopted by the apostles."

The plan of operations against slavery sketched in the "Appeal" seems to Dr. Fisk not suited to be effective. His criticism goes straight to the mark: —

"Some glimpse our brethren do afford us of a plan of emancipation, which we may briefly notice in order to show how they refute in practice what they assert as abstract theory. They say: 'We do not mean by this that all the slaves should be thrust out loose upon the nation, like a herd of cattle, nor that they should be immediately invested with all political privileges and rights, nor yet that they should be banished from their native land to a distant clime. But we mean that the slaves should immediately be brought under the protection of suitable laws, by placing them under such a supervision as might be adapted to their condition.' Our brethren here specify three essential parts of slavery to be retained: 1. The slaves are not to be 'loose, like a herd of cattle.' 2. They are not to have all their political rights. And, 3. They are to be under special laws. How our brethren can assert 'that the system is cruel and unjust in all its parts,' and yet that these essential parts are right, that 'no Christian can lend his influence one moment to its support,' yet coolly advise that these unjust parts should be supported; that the entire sys-

tem 'should be abandoned now and forever,' and yet be retained indefinitely for years, — is to us a 'harmony not understood.'"

As to the authority and example of Wesley, it is said: —

"Yet, as it happens, on this subject it would be very difficult for the sudden devotees of Mr. Wesley's authority to show very tangible opposition in principle between Mr. Wesley and ourselves. Mr. Wesley begins by defining a slavery such as no one can for a moment support from the Bible, and describes such a slavery as we have repeatedly affirmed no Christian can perpetrate; and he concludes with exhortations to emancipation, without prescribing the mode or measures: but we may infer from his approving letter to Mr. Wilberforce that, like Wilberforce and the Methodist Conference, Wesley was a gradualist."

Dr. Fisk doubts whether Wesley himself would have used the same language or followed the same course here that he did in England, or that he "would have considered it likely to forward the cause of Southern emancipation." Thus he paints "the contrariety of the cases:" —

"The chains which bound the slaves in the West Indies were held by the hands of the English Parliament, assembled in London, and elected by the people of Britain. The path to emancipation, then, was plain and direct. Rouse with thrilling peals the public effervescence, rear a 'system of agitation' through the land, swell up the surging tide of popular commotion, and Parliament must soon yield. This was perfectly safe,

for those islands were too petty to revolt and separate; it was perfectly sure, for every syllable that touched the national nerve sent its electric thrill into the soul of the Parliament; it was perfectly right, for with Britain, people and Parliament, was the power of liberation, and therefore the responsibility of the oppression. *In all these three respects we are precisely and diametrically the reverse.* With us, it would not be safe; for the Southern States, near half the nation in firm phalanx, would be perfectly able and willing to form themselves into an independent, perpetual slave empire; it could not be sure, for every impulse we could give would only reanimate the spirit and renerve the arm of that cruel legislation which now oppresses them; it would not be right, for we could not be morally justifiable in adopting measures rationally certain of resulting in increased cruelty, disunion, and confirmed slavery."

The "Address" is criticised because its tone and spirit are such as to obstruct the further execution of the only really effective measures for the removal of slavery: —

"Many a keen-eyed slave-holder, upon principle, is secretly pleased with the over-doing violence which disgusts and assails the friends of practicable emancipation in the South; which affords a pretext of stronger laws and tighter fetters; which cools the hopes and silences the voice of the friends of liberty around him."

Further agitation would be sure to remove the question from its status as a moral and ecclesiastical question, and make it a political issue. "Methodism has been evangelically powerful because she has been politically neutral. Let her

become proud of her influence and impregnated with the spirit of politics, and her beams are dimmed, her strength departed, and her ruin nigh." No deliverance can come to the slaves from political agitation. It is only those who do not like this course who can expect a hearing from Southern men. It was merely because Wilbur Fisk and his friends had kept aloof from such proceedings that they could hope for a kindly hearing: —

"We have not — we know not that in the nature of the case we can have — demonstration that our brethren of the South have never, while laboring for the salvation of the slave, omitted any opportunity of effecting their emancipation. Of this, from their more intimate knowledge, they are best able to decide; and we have confidence in their piety that they will make, upon a subject so momentous, a conscientious decision. Yet to our brethren of the South, if our feeble voice may not be wholly unheard by them, in language which we are sure they will recognize as the general tone of Christian brotherly kindness, we would address our most intense entreaty that, unless it be at the expense of higher, immortal interests, they would now, in this day of light and peace and of moral power, emulate the noble stand of our brethren of England, and, with the name of Wesley on their banners, and his spirit in their hearts, would seize the timely honor of leading out the foremost van of the greatest Christian movements which, in some of our states, are directing their onward march towards the ultimate achievement of universal emancipation."

With his usual energy in forwarding any views

he had adopted, Dr. Fisk aided in the formation of colonization societies (though he would not join an anti-slavery society). He kept himself informed as to their methods of operation, he treasured up documents and letters setting forth their work, and delighted greatly when one was formed at Middletown.

In an address before this body delivered on July 4, 1835, he states and argues the reasons for his special devotion to colonization. He says that there is no natural reason why a colonizationist should not belong to an anti-slavery society also, save that the partisans of the latter have waged unrelenting war upon the former.

"1. The anti-slavery society has no good chance to improve the condition of the slaves.

"Nay, some of their lecturers have publicly said that one of the greatest difficulties in the progress of their principles was the fact that some of the slave-owners treated the slaves with kindness. A meliorated condition of slavery would be to them one of the most undesirable events that could occur.

"The members of that society are none of them slave-holders, — their constitution excludes such, — hence they cannot liberate slaves themselves in a private way. Can they do it in a public way by legislation? It would seem not. The great theatre of this society's operations is in the non-slave-holding states. Now, what have these states, in their legislative capacity, to do with the question of slavery in the slave-holding states? Nothing. What has the national legislature to do with it? Nothing."

Colonizationists have at various times emancipated slaves by the hundreds: —

"We are sometimes taunted with the demand, by what rule of arithmetic we can calculate the final extinction of slavery by colonization, if, in nineteen years, this plan has removed but a small proportion of the net increase of one year. We will solve this arithmetical question when our opponents will solve the following: If, in three or four years of modern abolitionism, not one slave has been liberated by the society or any of its members, how long will it take them to emancipate all the slaves of the United States?"

Dr. Fisk next argues that the education of the free blacks in the Northern States has been quite as much in the hands of colonizationists as of those of abolitionists. He argues that the social standing of free blacks at the North has been rather injured than improved by the anti-slavery societies. He says that the agents of the colonization society have improved the condition and prospects of the slave, since they labor where labor may succeed: —

"The voice of a Bascom, and a Finley, and of a Breckenridge, and others have been heard through the entire South, pleading for the elevation of these victims of prejudice and oppression. Nor were they heard in vain: a general interest was beginning to be felt, and the work of alleviation was gradually advancing, until an ill-timed, precipitate benevolence began to urge forward its high-pressure system of agitation and excitement. This has increased the severity of slave legisla-

tion; it has silenced the voice of discussion in the slave states, and has checked and retarded, perhaps for years, the progress and final consummation of slave melioration and emancipation."

The triumph of such principles would mean the removal of the question to the political arena, where its victory would mean a dissolution of the Union: —

"A political anti-slavery party will doubtless soon be organized, and when once this is made a question at the polls, its moral bearings will be lost sight of. If such a political party should succeed, nothing short of a dissolution of the Union would follow. . . . There is nothing the South 'would be more inclined to do than to separate herself from the Northern States, whenever they assume a political attitude in opposition to her social and political rights, — rights guaranteed to her by the solemnities of constitutional provisions and publicly plighted faith.'

"At a late protracted anti-slavery meeting it was moved and carried with acclamation, without a dissenting voice, that all ministers and church-members who are the owners of slaves ought to be excluded from our pulpits and from our communion. Let this doctrine be carried out, and what would be the consequence? The most ruinous to the peace of our churches. The congregational churches, from the independent character of each church or association, would feel it least. The Baptists would feel it more. But these could not feel it like the Protestant Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist Episcopal churches. It would be an entire dismemberment of those churches, not merely a

grand division into Northern and Southern; but here in the North we should be divided among ourselves, brother against brother, and society against society: and the work of God would be neglected and the spirit of devotion lost in the schisms and contentions which would ensue. . . . No church would suffer like ours. We are not only bound together by a common faith, a common discipline, and common ecclesiastical judicatories, but we are united also by a common pastoral charge, by which the whole flock is, in a manner, the property of each and every pastor, and each and every pastor the property of the whole flock. Throw this spirit of disfellowship and schism into a religious community thus constituted, and what would be the result? . . . Even infidels would weep at the consequences, political, social, and domestic, that would follow such a schism."

Once, when Dr. Fisk was returning from New York to his home by steamboat, he had as fellow-passengers several earnest abolitionists, one of whom was the Hon. James G. Birney. They became involved in a discussion of slavery. Shortly after Dr. Fisk received a request to correct a partial and garbled account of their debate, that Mr. Birney might publish it. This elicited the following response: —

"Hon. James G. Birney: —

"Dear Sir, — I was not a little surprised at the reception of your note of the fourth instant, announcing your purpose to publish a sketch of the discussion we held on Saturday last, while on our way from New York to New Haven.

"To this I have many objections. Among others, before I choose to have my sentiments spread before the public, I prefer to do it myself, in my own words, and in my own way. In these times of public calumny and misrepresentation, I would not have a familiar friend publish my sentiments for me, much less an interested opponent.

"I object, also, to the sketch given in your letter, as *one-sided, deficient, and unfair.* I do not accuse you of designing to misrepresent the conversation; I only state the fact, as a reason for objecting to your proposed course. If you should publish your sketch as it is given in your letter to me, one of two things must follow: I must be silent and suffer the public to be deceived, or I must enter into a public controversy with you. For the latter alternative I have neither time nor inclination. The public, sir, do not pay me a salary to spend my time writing upon this subject. I am engaged in other and important duties; and if I appear before the public, I must choose my own time and manner of doing it, so as not to interfere with other paramount engagements.

"It is in accordance with the practice of many abolitionists, I know, to draw others before the public when and as they will, without reference to the proprieties and courtesies of life. That you, sir, are of this character, I have yet to learn. If, however, you attempt it with me in this case, and in the manner proposed, you will have learned beforehand that I consider it *unfair, ungentlemanly, and unchristian.*

"Most respectfully yours,

"W. Fisk."

Yet Mr. Birney published his sketch, with the accompanying correspondence.

By this time Dr. Fisk had come to the settled conviction that some of the leaders in the agitation meant to divide the church, unless they could force their views upon the whole body. This view he announced to various ministerial friends both at the North and in the South. So strong were his fears that he kept a keen watch on the contestants to hinder any such efforts. In certain articles in the "Christian Advocate" he denounced the Rev. George Storrs for having committed himself to schismatic principles. In the same articles he gave such offense to La Roy Sunderland, the editor of "Zion's Watchman," that he sent Dr. Fisk formal notice that charges would be presented against him of defamation and slander at the Conference of 1838. Dr. Fisk's outline of his defense exists in his own hand, showing that, even with Sunderland's own statement of the facts, there was no defamation, no slander. But the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Luckey and another witness, both from New York, proved the truth of Dr. Fisk's allegations so directly that the prosecution broke down.

The course events did take, both in the Methodist Episcopal Church and in the nation at large, was such as to vindicate the soundness of Mr. Fisk's judgment. These new movements had got such full possession of the conference that he thought this the controlling influence in the elec-

tion of delegates to the General Conference of 1836, and he protested against this change by resigning his own seat in the General Conference, and having his reasons for the step entered on the journal. The organization of a new church, under the leadership of Orange Scott, showed how true was Dr. Fisk's much denounced assertion, that some of the abolition leaders would rather divide the church than wholly fail in their enterprise. The division of the parent body into two sectional bodies, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, in 1844, sent ecclesiastical discord and contention into every Methodist conference, society, class-meeting, or home. The election of Mr. Lincoln, even on a platform which foreboded no attacks upon the institution of slavery in the states where it existed under constitutional protection, was the signal for the secession of the Southern States from the Union.

One may fairly doubt the feasibility of the plan of action in reference to slavery proposed by Dr. Fisk and his associates, but how can anybody wonder that the scheme appealed to his confidence as a Christian and his hopes as a patriot? Can any one doubt but that the proper effect of the Christian religion operating upon the minds of Christian masters and slaves would be to rob that awful system of its infamy and cruelty? Why could not such cases be reproduced, by high and holy and constant endeavor, so widely as to render

community after community, and state after state the abodes of the most enlightened opposition to human bondage? Such a faith might seem hopeless, and such a task impossible; but nothing is impossible to Christian wisdom and love.

Had such a conquest of human reason and Christian love banished American slavery off the face of the earth, that would have been one of the noblest victories our Christian civilization has ever won. We should have had no schisms in the local or national churches. Slavery would have been gradually abolished by the voluntary action of enlightened slave-holders, by the careful legislation of wise and well-informed statesmen, supported by the sympathy and coöperation of all who bear the Christian name.

There would have been no rebellion, with its immense drafts upon the life and the treasury of our nation. Death in battle and camp would not have scattered consternation, sorrow, and bereavement through all the homes of our fair land. No jealousy of North and South, no Ku-klux Klans, no frauds on the ballot-box, no military governments, no mutual jealousies and rivalries in the good work of enlightening and educating the colored people, and no direful race prejudices to obstruct the spirit of American political and social advancement.

And how easy to turn the self-denial and self-control won in such a triumphant struggle against such an enormous evil system against other evils

which still infest and curse our country! To win the whole world to the side of Jesus Christ would have seemed easy to the veterans who had with their combined efforts put away slavery, root and branch, from our country.

CHAPTER X.

MANIFOLD ACTIVITY.

Dr. Fisk, notwithstanding his manifold labors, was always deeply interested in missionary toil. He gave freely of his means, time, and efforts to diffuse the missionary spirit throughout the entire church of God. He preached, lectured, sent communications to the newspapers, in order to diffuse useful knowledge concerning this work, and to rekindle apostolic zeal for the conversion of souls. He induced the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York to support a missionary to Liberia. He, whose devotion to the negro race was disputed by men who hated the Colonization Society, whose cause was advocated by Dr. Fisk with such ability and effect, offered his own services for the Liberian Mission, and would have actually gone to labor and lay down his life on that dangerous coast, but for the irresistible protests that came from the friends of Wesleyan University. He rejoiced in the appointment of Rev. Melville B. Cox to the perilous field which he had coveted for himself, and visited New York and other places to raise money for that noble work.

The missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church

amongst the Canadian Indians had been so successful that numerous and flourishing stations were established amongst them. Few of these converts could read English, and, as there was no translation of the Scriptures into their language, the progress of the native churches was slow and painful. Dr. Fisk, in seconding a speech by the Rev. W. Case in behalf of this work, induced the Young Men's Bible Society to secure three thousand dollars for printing the entire New Testament in the Mohawk tongue. This proposal was made in 1831, and Dr. Fisk did his utmost to carry out this benevolent work until the translation was completed in 1839. A well of salvation to those tribes has that precious book become.

In 1833 four Indians of the Flathead tribe had made their appearance at St. Louis to inquire into the Christian religion. Two of the four messengers who brought this novel report had visited one of the Catholic mission schools in Canada, and so their interest had been excited. But the immediate occasion of this singular embassy was the fact that some visitor of their idolatrous feasts had told them that their methods of worshiping the Great Spirit were entirely wrong and deeply displeasing to him, and that the white people far to the eastward had a book which would tell them how to worship God with acceptance in his sight. So much were they moved by this statement that they called a council to deliberate on the subject, and four chiefs were dispatched to the East in quest of infor-

mation. These chiefs had heard of General Clarke, the companion of Lewis on his travels through the Oregon Territory, and turned their steps to St. Louis, where Clarke then resided as Indian commissioner; for they thought he must be able to give them information about the white man's God and his religion. General Clarke kindly gave these ignorant but noble men the main facts of the history of the Bible, the great central truths concerning the nature of God, the incarnation, and the redemptive death of the Son of God, and the doctrines and precepts of the Christian faith. The facts here set forth were sent to G. P. Disosway, Esq., in a letter from Mr. William Walker, the exploring agent of the Wyandots, and appeared in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," March 1, 1833. Though burdened with work at the university, Dr. Fisk's eye caught sight of the wonderful tidings of the quest of heathen tribes for a knowledge of the true God. He at once read the article aloud to Mrs. Fisk and said, "We will have a mission there."

"It would be a noble enterprise, but where will you get the man?"

"I know of but one in the world every way qualified for such an undertaking, and you know who that is."

"Yes, but you are too late for him. You know Mr. Jason Lee is about to apply for admission to the British Conference."

Mr. Fisk wrote a letter, before sitting down, to

Mr. Lee, and thus by his promptness and decision secured the most available man in the world for the Oregon mission. Then he sounded the following bugle-call in the "Christian Advocate and Journal:" —

"HEAR! HEAR! WHO WILL RESPOND TO THE CALL BEYOND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS?

"MESSRS. EDITORS, — The communication of Brother G. P. Disosway, inclosing one from the Wyandot agent on the subject of the deputation of the Flathead Indians to General Clarke, has excited in many in this section intense interest. And, to be short about it, we are for having a mission established there at once. I have proposed the following plan: Let two suitable men, unincumbered with families, and possessing the spirit of martyrs, throw themselves into the nation; live with them; learn their language; preach Christ to them; and, as the way opens, introduce schools, agriculture, and the arts of civilized life. The means for these improvements can be furnished through the fur-traders, and by the reinforcements with which we can from time to time strengthen the mission. Money shall be forthcoming. I will be bondsman for the church. All we want is the men. Who will go? Who? I know one young man who I think will go, and of whom I can say I know none like him for the enterprise. If he will go (and we have written to him on the subject), we only want another, and the mission will be commenced the coming season. Were I young and healthy and unincumbered, how gladly would I go! But this honor is reserved for another. Bright will be his crown, glorious his reward.

"Affectionately yours, W. FISK.

"WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, *March* 9, 1833."

This spirited appeal brought offers from quite a number of devoted ministers of the Gospel of Christ, who would readily have foregone all the advantages of civilized existence, and confronted the dangers of barbarian life, with the probability of a premature death, if only they might lead the savages of the Oregon region to the true faith and a godly life. But before these offers reached Dr. Fisk by mail, he had already obtained the Rev. Jason Lee and his nephew, Rev. Daniel Lee, and Mr. Cyrus Shepherd, who went out as a school-teacher. By the ensuing November, these three were accepted by the Missionary Society, and appointed by Bishop Hedding to their remote scene of labor and sufferings. While they were still lingering in New York, uncertain what sort of preparation would be most useful to them in their work, news reached Dr. Fisk that a Captain Wyeth had returned to Boston from a trading expedition to Oregon. Says Dr. Holdich: —

"This seemed like an opening of Providence. By the advice of the board they turned their course to Boston. On this journey Dr. Fisk accompanied them, aiding them by his counsel, and holding public meetings with them. He preached on Friday and on Sunday evenings in the Bromfield Street Church, and on the former occasion Captain Wyeth answered, in the presence of the congregation, sundry questions touching the prospects of a mission to Oregon, and gave much information highly valuable to the missionaries. . . . Early in the spring the missionaries proceeded to St. Louis, holding public

meetings at every important town, and everywhere quickening the church to effort. The latter part of April they started from St. Louis on horseback for the place appointed to meet the trading companies, and thence over the Rocky Mountains, three thousand miles away from the abodes of civilization."

The financial response to this appeal was very prompt and general. Societies and individual members of other churches, as well as in the Methodist Episcopal Church, hurried on their contributions. Here is a specimen of these outside contributions: —

"Rev. Wilbur Fisk, D. D.:

"Sir, — I was interested in the account recently given in some of the public journals of the solicitude of the Flathead Indians to know the true God, and how to worship him.

"The appeal made by you in their behalf derived weight from the assurance given by you that, if you were younger, you would yourself carry the gospel to them. While I rejoice that you have taken up the subject with so much zeal, I still more rejoice that devoted men of ardent piety have consecrated themselves to this holy employment. Let them endeavor to possess the prudence of Schwarz, the humility of Brainard, the learning of Martyn, the devotedness of Fisk, the self-denial of Judson, the untiring ardor of Gutzlaff, and, with the blessing of the God of missions on their labors, they may soon hope to see these children of the forest becoming sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

"Funds will be required to accomplish your benevolent undertaking, and the enclosed $50 will not, I

trust, be less acceptable from the circumstance that it is presented by one not of your denomination.

"X. X.

"NEW LONDON, *July* 19."

So numerous were these offerings that Dr. Fisk was obliged to publish a public request that this special mission might be left to the generosity of the churches in New Haven, Hartford, and Middletown.[1]

Thus Dr. Fisk had the intense satisfaction of founding one of the most interesting and useful of modern missions by his personal leadership and Christian courage. He kept himself acquainted with all the details of the growth of a mission in which he had the double interest of a founder's love, and of watching the personal success and usefulness of missionaries who were "his own sons in the gospel."

It is doubtful whether any other man ever possessed so much influence in the New England Conference as Wilbur Fisk. Hence he was the adviser to whom all looked on critical occasions. Timothy Merritt was thoroughly familiar with all the localities and distances involved in the charge of murder brought against the Rev. E. K. Avery, a member of that body. But though he was one of the wisest, ablest, and noblest ministers of the conference, he did not think he had done his duty

[1] For a full account of this singular Indian embassy and its results, see *Oregon: The Struggle for Possession.* By William Barrows (American Commonwealth Series).

by a brother minister under such awful charges until he had by private correspondence made Dr. Fisk thoroughly familiar with these facts. Dr. Fisk's mind and pen gave shape to the action taken before that body in that intricate and perplexing case. Such influence quite as often brought him personal criticism as commendation from the various parties interested. But all such letters reveal the utmost confidence in his integrity.

In the Anti-masonic excitement which followed the tragedy at Batavia, the intensest sentiment was gradually aroused against clergymen in all denominations who were Masons. Many excellent people would not hear Masons preach or pray. Here and there a man of great force of character, or remarkable originality, stood out, bold and defiant, against this storm of obloquy and distrust. Father Taylor never bent for an hour to these blinding and perverting influences. He marched in all Masonic processions in his full regalia as a Masonic chaplain, and shot out his irresistible arrows of wit upon all and any who challenged him. On one ceremonial occasion, he was to make the public prayer. It was one of his most comprehensive prayers. This was one petition: "O Lord, we beseech thee to bless all the enemies of the noble and ancient order of Free Masons. Gracious Lord, make their hearts as soft as their heads are."

Notwithstanding some such examples of inde-

pendence, it looked as though the usefulness of many a minister would be greatly imperilled, if not utterly destroyed. Here, again, Dr. Fisk drew up the report which was adopted by all parties as an adjustment of these difficulties. So wise and prudent was it that in a few years the agitation wholly vanished.

He also was the person who represented the New England Conference whenever its administration was challenged. The impression made by Dr. Fisk on the other members of the General Conferences of which he was a member is told by Rev. George Peck, D. D.: —

"When Dr. Fisk took the stand, whether as a preacher, or as a platform orator, he was always well-prepared and perfectly self-possessed. He had a sufficiency of self-reliance to overcome all timidity, yet his modesty and delicacy were as evident as his manly dignity. He usually conquered in debate, though he never triumphed over an adversary. It was so evident that he contended for truth not victory, and he bore his success with so much meekness and grace, that his opponents were saved much of the mortification of defeat. When he assailed the vice of intemperance, he conciliated even the rum-drinker and the rum seller by contrasting the right and the wrong so strikingly that both avarice and appetite were struck dumb. He would sometimes plant his batteries on some such generalization as this: 'To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' He preached a most effective sermon on this text, in the city of Philadelphia, during the session of

the General Conference in 1832, in which he demonstrated, in a most triumphant manner, the moral obligation to help forward the great temperance movement by all proper means. The justice and truth of his statements, in connection with his peculiarly felicitous manner, left upon all minds the impression of fitness; and the intelligent hearer spontaneously exclaimed, 'How forcible are right words!'"

CHAPTER XI.

THE PREACHER.

Dr. Whedon gives this account of the preaching of Dr. Fisk: —

"The simplicity we have mentioned was the basis of his manners as a gentleman. If conversation be an art susceptible, as some think, of systematic and improving cultivation, the unstudied spontaneity of Dr. Fisk's colloquial remarks betrayed very little indeed of such deliberate elaboration. Unprepared appropriateness was its prevailing characteristic. He affected no polished points, no quick-sprung antitheses. There were no previously adjusted plans, no conversational ambushes, no prepared accidents, no premeditated impromptus. You carried from his intercourse an impress of interest, as if you had experienced a sense of diffusive fascination; but retained no one outstanding gem of surpassing brilliancy, flinging a shade over the surrounding lustre, and itself endowed with diamond indestructibleness. He seldom flung out the elastic *jeu d'esprit*, to be rebounded around the circle, reverberated into publicity, and stereotyped into a proverb. He was not of the Johnsonian school, a professed converser, nor needed to borrow from the Boswell school a colloquial reporter. He never found it necessary to assert his social dignity by arrogating the whole conversation; he dealt forth no elbow-chair

orations, as if the sound of his own voice were the sweetest music to his ear, transforming the parlor into a lecture-room, the social circle into auditory, and the dialogue into soliloquy. Bland, cordial, animate, recollected, and dignified; flexible to all the varieties of rank and character; sympathizing with the humblest and courteous to the dignitary; dextrous in every difficulty, felicitous in every exigency, and self-possessed in every surprise, — he diffused around his daily presence and converse the atmosphere of his own pure, gentle, and high-toned spirit; ever ready with the judicious counsel, the lucid illustration, or the even-handed discussion; now brightening up the scene with a cheery yet chastened humor; now sobering it with recollective monition, checking the rising impropriety by the powers of severely silent rebuke, or, when it would surge up in rebellion, capable of rising into a subduing mastery over the rampant elements: these are the traits which, it is conceived, should all the memories qualified by near acquaintance to delineate the original, would be found visible in every picture.

"From the fact that Dr. Fisk did not indulge in colloquial harangue, it is not to be inferred that, in assuming the public speaker, the transition was a transformation. On the contrary, the man in public was just the unchanged man of private life, in both states appropriate to the situation. As a public speaker, his style was the natural and spontaneous product of his personal qualities, flowing out of his true individuality and not artificially assumed upon it. A more extended audience required of course a more elevated elocution, a wider range of thought, and a loftier personal bearing. He usually began with a clear enunciation of his starting-points; then ranged through a train of consecutive logic,

so accurate as generally to evince its own justice, yet so relieved by fancy, or illustrated by analogies, or impregnated with a feeling glow, as to secure attention; and as he passed through the process, gathering fervor from its rapidity and gathering intenser rapidity from its fervor, he generally rose to flights of surpassing grandeur, or wound off with periods of thrilling appeal. And this style of thought was accompanied with its corresponding appropriate delivery. First, rising with a simple, collected, saint-like presence (preceded, however, usually by the almost convulsive cough, which commonly awakened for the moment a painful sympathy from the unaccustomed part of the audience), his manner was for the time easy and equable; but as he warmed with his subject, the feeling flowed out in the natural gesture, the eye lighted up with new animation, the countenance beamed with a glowing expression, the frame dilated into a loftier bearing, and the whole man impregnate and luminous with the subject.

"The description which we have here given is of course more particularly true to the successful order of Dr. Fisk's pulpit oratory. In the efforts of his latter days, especially those exhibited in the chapel of the University, either from the state of his health or from views of practical usefulness, he seemed to adopt a style of less sustained and more colloquial character. With his pupils and associate officers, as in a family coterie, he seemed to indulge the privilege of a more easy and familiar style, less prepared and elaborate than his public efforts, following very much the incidentally suggested trains and transitions that seemed to arise in his mind. These efforts were not particularly calculated for sermonizing models; they, of course, presented occa-

sional crudenesses of thought and improprieties of expression; they were somewhat irregular in their arrangement, and disproportionate and digressive in form: but they possessed high interest as the apparently spontaneous discoursings of a superior mind; and they abounded with many a lesson of divine wisdom, many a passage of impassioned eloquence.

"The common-sense substratum which we have assigned as the basis of Dr. Fisk's character may be pronounced preëminently the basis of his mode of thought as an orator. A prominent fault, we have often thought, of pulpit ministry is, that its modes of reasoning and expression are too professional, too unnatural. They are the thinking of the trained theologian, with his own vocabulary, his own logic; indulging which all the more freely because he feels sure of his audience, and secure from audible contradiction, he goes along disregarding the unspoken difficulties, and exulting in conventional demonstrations, which prove just nothing to the ordinary thinker. Dr. Fisk was the common-sense preacher. He was at bottom — and without education would have been — a direct, practical, clear-headed, common-sense man; and with such minds, comprehending the world's great average, he had a natural power of sympathy and self-identification. This quality — his perfect self-adaptation to the popular mind — constituted one main secret of his great power over it. He knew that in every breast there are the germs of good sense; that there are elementary starting-points, — the mental sprouts of all sound thought. Into these he transfused his own soul; he impregnated the germ with the quickening spirit; he brought it out into new yet natural developments, and he elevated it into lofty

and glorious expansions. And so natural and spontaneous was the process, that the hearer thought the reasonings pretty much his own. They were his own sort of thoughts; at any rate, he was sure they were just what he could and should have thought; only it was thinking a little harder, a little farther, a little more clearly, and a great deal more nobly. And thus the worldly and the shrewd were forced to feel the grapple of his mind, while they appreciated the purity of his character, and to doubt whether, after all, there was not some common sense in theology and religion somewhere else than in books. Through his life he thus drew under his moral influence secular men of thought and character, and in his life presented to them a not ineffective lesson. To one of these he exclaimed, 'You behold me, sir, hovering between two worlds!' 'And fit for either,' was the beautiful reply.

"It was uncongenial with the manly simplicity of Dr. Fisk's mind carefully to hoard his oratorical reputation. The arts of rhetorical keeping he knew not. When once advised, upon the assumption of the college presidency, to preach seldom, and reserve himself only for great occasional displays, he shrunk at the thought. He had no fear, by constant pouring forth, to exhaust the fountain; and he was not too proud to waste the most masterly exertions of his mind upon the smallest and humblest audience. Strains of oratory, that might richly have filled the city cathedral, were freely lavished upon the country school-house! It was not his object to make a grand oration, but to gain a more ultimate and business purpose. He aimed to be the faithful Christian minister, not the splendid pulpit-orator. He forgot not his subject in himself; he forgot himself in his subject. And when

he came forth to his ministerial performance, it was not after a period of solicitous, intensive, verbal, *memoriter* premeditation. He did not, then, involve his plain thoughts in folds of wordy gorgeousness; nor did he invest them with that intensive glare of diction which, however entrancing to the fancy, renders the thought itself too dazzlingly painful to the mental gaze to be intelligible to the mental perception. No: his oratory was the natural and animate glow of the mind, effervescing with the subject; or rather, it was the spontaneous effervescence of the mind itself. For the subject that animated his periods animated his soul. In the days of what was his health, but what to others would have been disease, he esteemed it as his high delight to preach with unremitting frequency; when the sympathy of all others for his illness would have spared his service, he could not spare himself. So long as he could stand in the pulpit, he proclaimed the mission of his Master; and when he could no longer stand up to proclaim it, he proclaimed it still. It were a picture worthy a nobler hand than mine to portray this minister of Christ, as his friends watched his successive yieldings to the attacks of the destroyer; a feeble yet resolute figure, visited by successive shocks of disease, and losing at each shock that which he did not recover; preaching so long as he could stand in the desk; when he was never again to stand up in that desk, preaching from his seat, — in his sick and dying chamber preaching, it was said, as he never preached before; so long as the crumbling elements of his body could frame a voice, sending forth the dying articulations of his faithful ministry.

"There was a kind of public exercise which we must not omit to mention, which, the farthest possible re-

moved from artificial rhetoric, presented, as Dr. Fisk performed it, a specimen of eloquence most genuine and pure: we mean the eloquence of prayer. If eloquence be the natural utterance of the simplest and most spontaneous breathing of the highest and holiest sentiments with which our nature is susceptible of being inspired, then were Dr. Fisk's addresses to the Deity specimens of the truest eloquence. Devoid of artificial pomp, and devoid of affectation, and especially devoid of that most subtile of all affectation, the affectation of simplicity, they possessed a real simplicity, variety, and pertinency which we have never seen equaled. They were simple, for they expressed in direct and unambitious words the natural mind of the speaker; they were varied, for he had no stereotyped phrases, and the persons most familiar with his daily devotions remember not his ever twice using the same form of expression; they were pertinent, suiting with happy and instantaneous yet dignified applicableness the peculiar exigencies of specific circumstances and characters. Persons of intellectual character of other denominations, or of worldly views, have expressed their surprise and pleasure at the unstudied, extempore beauty of his occasional, instantaneous prayers. Among the most hallowed recollections of our departed friend are the soft and soothing tones of his voice, as they melted along the current of fervid devotion with which he loved, at the close of an evening social assemblage, to consecrate the hour of interview."

CHAPTER XII.

EUROPEAN TRAVEL.

In the year 1834 Dr. Fisk laid a severe strain upon his physical strength by his unwearied labors in that season of religious revival which has been already described. Never after that did his general health appear so good as it had usually been up to that date. If he wrote in the latter part of the day, after he had gone through the usual routine of labor, his handwriting was apt to be poor and indistinct, so that he took up the habit of writing as much as he could in the morning hours. What veiled from many eyes the serious condition of his health was the amount and variety of the work he contrived to perform, and the sweet and sunny disposition which was as fully manifest in his worst seasons as in his most vigorous health. Such unvaried cheerfulness and unabated hopefulness kept many of his friends from any keen sense of his danger.

His best medical advisers, and especially his most trusted adviser, Dr. Sewall, of Washington, D. C., advised him to try the effect of a sea voyage and the European tour. But Dr. Sewall urged him to make everything else subservient to the

recovery of his health, and to take Mrs. Fisk with him. Then large additions to the philosophical and chemical apparatus would be requisite to put Wesleyan University in the front rank of New England colleges in its equipment for teaching natural science. Books, also, were needed in various departments, to give the students and instructors the best facilities for doing good work.

Hence the Joint Board of Wesleyan University authorized Dr. Fisk to visit Europe, to afford him a long respite from care and duty, in order that he might regain his usual health, and that he might make purchases of books and apparatus while abroad. Even before his departure he was taken ill, and seemed far advanced in pulmonary disease. But he rallied quickly from his worst symptoms, and set about some of his most urgent business while unable to be about the house more than a part of the time.

By these means his departure was delayed until September 8, 1835. Besides Mrs. Fisk he had as a traveling companion Mr. Harvey B. Lane, afterwards for more than twenty years a Professor of Mathematics or Greek in Wesleyan University. He was furnished with a good store of letters of introduction to such persons as could be helpful to him in his official business. He was requested by various missionary societies to inspect and report concerning the operations of missionary societies in Europe. He was also invited to represent the American Bible Society at certain meetings to be

held while Dr. Fisk would be in Europe. The General Conference of 1836 requested Dr. Fisk to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church at the ensuing meeting of the British Conference.

It would be a long and largely unprofitable task to follow these travelers through their protracted wanderings in Europe, for not only does Dr. Holdich give a full account of them, but Dr. Fisk himself published at the press of the Harpers a volume of some 688 pages covering the whole range of this journey. The volume evidently appealed to a wide circle of readers, since $2,700 was paid over to Dr. Fisk as the author's honorarium. Here this massive volume will be used simply to cast light on the character of its author. A traveler who records a long series of observations on foreign countries is pretty sure to throw not a little light on himself, whether he does upon the countries visited or not.

We have already had occasion to criticise the somewhat narrow and illiberal views taken by Dr. Fisk, in his introductory address at Wesleyan University, of the relation of the fine arts to education. This European journey corrected these ideas with respect to music, architecture, and painting, though the masterpieces of sculpture left him cold. We have space only to insert his account of the effect of Italian music upon his mind: —

"TENEBRÆ AND MISERERE.

"On Wednesday, P. M., there was the finest music by the pope's choir that I ever heard. The function is called *Tenebræ*, or darkness, and seems to be designed to commemorate the darkness and gloom of the church at the hour of betrayal, or perhaps the scene in the garden. The origin and design of this performance, however, seem not to be fully settled by the Catholics themselves, nor is it of any great consequence to determine it. It is enough for me that it was, on the whole, one of the most interesting occasions I have enjoyed at Rome. The pope attends in the Sistine Chapel, and thither, of course, the multitude resorted; but as there was to be the same music at St. Peter's, we proposed hearing it there, rather than endure the crowd at the chapel. The exercise was long, and consisted, in the fore part, of lessons sung and chanted from the Psalms, the Lamentations, and from that part of the Epistle to the Corinthians describing the institution of the sacrament. The whole was interspersed with antiphonies, and all performed with admirable skill. Indeed, it is said that none but those trained in this school can perform this music. The French, when they were in power here, carried this music to France; but it availed them not, for none of their performers could sing it. But this choir perform it to universal admiration. The great concentration of excellence, however, and of course of interest, is in the closing piece, called the *Miserere*, which is the 51st Psalm set to music by Allegri. It has its name from the first word in the Psalm, which commences in Latin, *Miserere mei, deus*. All who have read this Psalm have noticed what hum-

ble confession, what deep contrition, run through the whole of this beautiful composition. But what the psalmist has expressed so inimitably in words, seems, if possible, to be still more forcibly expressed in sounds; at least, putting the two together, they were overwhelming. Such wailing, such lamentation and woe, such tender, melting, agonizing strains of penitential grief and contrition! They came over my soul like a dissolving charm, melting my heart, and opening the very fountains of grief. Every emotion of my heart chimed in with the sentiments and the music, and I felt myself entirely carried away and transported by the inspirations of the occasion. It is worthy of notice that there were no females in the choir, and yet there were some of the finest treble voices I ever heard. I have heard before a counterfeit treble from a man, but it was not natural; here, however, it was the most perfect, and the strains fell in, one after another, from the finest falsetto to the gravest bass, and all so skillfully arranged and modified as to produce but one effect; it was like a multitude of old men and maidens, young men and children, pouring forth their united, concordant strains of chastened grief in all the bitterness and reverence of supplication and adoring penitence.

"As usual, in all cases of Catholic worship, numerous candles were burning, but they were extinguished one after another, until only one was left, and that was partially concealed behind the altar. Of the meaning of this there is not an agreement: some say it is the gradual extinction of the prophetic lights before the coming of Christ; others say it is designed to represent the fact that, when Christ was apprehended, all his disciples forsook him and fled. The concealing of the only

remaining light represents Christ in the tomb, whose light was suspended but not extinguished."

How corrupt the papal church was, in the judgment of Dr. Fisk, appears from a letter to Dr. Bunting, of London, dated February 12, 1836: —

"Next to the 'mystery of godliness,' the 'mystery of iniquity' is most marvelous! Whence had Satan such wisdom? Whence had iniquity such venom? How is it possible that all the combined cunning and sin of earth and hell could have succeeded, not merely in measurably corrupting the gospel, but in filling the very channels of salvation with the waters of death?"

With this striking statement of the fallen condition of the Roman Church, everything which Dr. Fisk says about the religious condition of the various Catholic countries visited by him coincides. He saw nothing else to do but to plant new churches, Methodist churches if possible, but Protestant churches anyhow, and commit to them the immense but disheartening mission of transforming the unbelieving world and a corrupted church. This is one of the points where Dr. Fisk seems to have accepted without reserve the opinions of the English and Protestant missionaries whom he met at various points in Europe. As he understood neither French nor Italian, he was not able, by hearing with his own ears nor by reading with his own eyes, to learn what was actually going on in the society about him. Had he been able to do this, he would, with his impartial

habit of observation and judgment, have gathered many signs which might justify the faith that the Roman Catholic Church is possibly nowhere so utterly corrupt and fallen away from God as to make her incapable of revival and renovation. For the Catholic Church in France was already far advanced on that movement of quickening through which she has had so great and honorable a share in what Guizot, in his "Meditations on the Actual State of Christendom," describes as "The Awakening of Christianity in France in the Nineteenth Century." Here Guizot is able to speak with a fullness of detail, and with the authority of an eye-witness of, and personal participant in, this great awakening. Had Dr. Fisk been fully cognizant of the condition of Catholic France in his day, not only would his sojourn in France have been much more cheerful and healthful than it was, but he might have seen, in the revived Christianity of Catholic France, good reasons for the hope that the revival would spread until many another nation of the Catholic world would yet come under the quickening breath of spiritual transformation, and so the hope arise that all Christendom should yet be brought back to newness of life. Here and there in Dr. Fisk's "Travels" come misleading passages like this: —

"And here it may be remarked that the fasts and penances of the papists are admirably contrived for sensual enjoyment. No man who wished to enjoy the most sensual gratification possible in this life would, if

he adapted the end to the means, pamper the senses to the full continually. He would have his changes and restraints at intervals, by which he would court the appetite, and keep alive and invigorate his desire and zest for pleasure. It is thus artfully that Romanism has mingled her cup, and meted out her indulgences and prohibitions; and when to this are joined her ecclesiastical pageantry and splendid ritual, a system of religion is formed the best possible to gratify the pleasure-seeking man of the world. In short, Romanism is practically — I will not say *a* religion merely, but emphatically — *the* religion of the natural heart."

It is such passages as these that mar our pleasure in reading Dr. Fisk's "Travels." It is true that, with his ignorance of the Italian and French languages, he was of necessity left to draw his information from English missionaries and other English-speaking persons whom he encountered in Europe. Nor was this a venial error merely, but one of great practical importance to himself and the world; since all the advice he gave to the various missionary and other societies which he represented was vitiated throughout by this error of vision. He did it ignorantly, but the very enormity of such conclusions should have warned him of his danger. At that day, Dr. Fisk represented the educated mind of the Methodist Episcopal Church in a greater degree than any one man has done since, and the very highest function of education should be to broaden the intellectual sympathies of a man. Of course Dr. Fisk had been too busy to

learn modern languages and literatures, so that he lies under no blame on that score; but since he knew the traditional narrowness of some of those whose counsel was to guide him so absolutely, it would have been well, when the policy of great Christian societies was to be shaped, to have spoken with more modesty, and with a clearer perception of the doubtful elements in his knowledge. The policy of some of the societies he advised has never wholly escaped from these narrow views for which Dr. Fisk was partly responsible.

Of Dr. Fisk's appearance before the British Conference, as delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Dr. Holdich says: —

"On the 19th of July, 1836, Dr. Fisk left London, with Mrs. Fisk, for Birmingham, the seat of the conference. During this journey, a disagreeable incident convinced him that his sojourn in England was destined to be disturbed by unkind offices growing out of a misapprehension of his views on the slavery question. A stranger informed him, while on the road, of a public meeting held the night before in Birmingham, at which it was announced to the audience that 'a Methodist bishop was expected at Birmingham in a few days, as a delegate to the Wesleyan Conference; that he was sent by a pro-slavery party in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was himself an advocate of slavery; and as the informant understood it, and as one of the journals afterward reported, it was also added that this bishop was a slave-holder. The name of the gentleman was called for by some in the assembly, that he might be known and treated accordingly when he should arrive.'

'Bishop Fisk!' was the reply. The stranger also 'intimated that it would be very unpleasant, if not unsafe, for the American bishop to show himself in Birmingham, as he would meet with rough treatment.' Dr. Fisk remarked that he 'did not claim to be a bishop (being only bishop-elect, and unordained); yet as he was the delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church to the Wesleyan Conference about to be held at Birmingham, he supposed he must be the person alluded to; that he should not take any pains to hide himself from the good people of Birmingham, and, therefore they should have full opportunity of doing all their pleasure in the case.' . . .

"But all this was by no means so trying to his feelings as a memorial sent by some members of some American conferences to the British Conference on this painful subject. It was signed by eighty-five names. This document, though, as is claimed by the signers, it was not so intended, was yet precisely adapted to create a prejudice against Dr. Fisk, and prevent his cordial reception by his brethren and the British public. He felt this the more keenly because many of the signers were those with whom he had long been on the most intimate terms, and some of whom he had laid under particular obligations. Perhaps, in the whole course of his life, nothing ever affected him so painfully as this transaction. Yet, while under the lash of lacerated feeling, his prayer was, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

"But, whatever influence this document may have had with individuals, the conference was too high-minded and honorable a body to listen to or entertain it; they decided that it would be improper for them officially to receive communications from single conferences or por-

tions of conferences while in regular correspondence with the whole body. The document, therefore, was not allowed to be read. This decision was made spontaneously, when Dr. Fisk was absent, to whom afterward the paper was handed by the president.

"A touching proof of Christian virtue follows. On the day of this painful transaction, the family whose hospitality Dr. and Mrs. Fisk enjoyed had invited company to dinner. Dr. Bunting was among the guests. With his usual cheerfulness and self-command, Dr. Fisk appeared in the drawing-room and at the table. Dr. Bunting mentioned the offensive document, and expressed his disapprobation of the measure. 'Dr. Fisk,' says Mrs. Fisk, 'with his peculiar sweetness replied: 'I know those brethren, doctor. They are good men. They have doubtless meant well, though their zeal for the slave seems, with them, to be the sundering of all other ties, and the all-absorbing principle of goodness.' To the same purport was his communication concerning it in the 'Christian Advocate;' but that was for the public eye, and this in pivate intercourse, while the wound in his feelings was just inflicted.

"Notwithstanding these efforts, Dr. Fisk was received with very gratifying cordiality and respect. For this he was no doubt, in part at least, indebted to the characteristic magnanimity of their president. On his introduction to the body in his official character, which had taken place before the arrival of the aforesaid memorial, in the course of his remarks he explained the attitude of the American church with reference to slavery, and explained its administration of discipline on this subject. On his conclusion, the conference expressed themselves satisfied, admitting that, so far as ecclesias-

tical action was concerned, the Methodist Church in America had done more than the Wesleyans in England, since the instructions given to their missionaries in the West Indies were to preach the gospel to all, and not intermeddle with their civil relations. To these views Dr. Bunting assented; adding, however, a wish that the General Conference of 1836 had reiterated its disapprobation of the system of slavery, but admitted nevertheless that it did not become the British 'to interfere and dictate in this matter, and especially to send agents to the United States to agitate the public mind.'"

As a preacher Dr. Fisk met with an appreciative hearing whenever he was himself, and he was fully himself whenever the ventilation of the buildings in which he spoke was such as to give him that fresh air which his delicate lungs demanded in order to enable him to speak with any effectiveness. There were one or two occasions when it was all he could do, with extreme exertion, to get through the sermon. But so impressive was he in his happier efforts that he preached twenty-eight sermons during his stay in England, besides giving several other public addresses. Among these was a charge delivered on the ordination of certain young missionaries for the foreign service. The "London Watchman" published this in full, saying: "Both from its intrinsic excellence, and the most impressive manner in which it was delivered, it is likely long to live in the remembrance of those who had the pleasure of hearing it."

By this time Dr. Fisk had completely accom-

plished the official purposes of his European tour. The English part of his journey, while much the pleasantest for him and the occasion of his forming friendships of the tenderest nature, was unfavorable to his health. The humidity of the climate, the exertion of so much public speaking, and the demands of social life, wearied him so much that he gladly embarked at Liverpool on the ship Roscoe, late in October, for New York and home.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RENEWAL AND THE END OF LABOR.

Dr. Fisk arrived in New York November 23, 1836. The next Sunday he preached to a large and delighted congregation on the felicitous text, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (Ps. cxix. 54). On the invitation of the Board of Managers of the Young Men's Missionary Society, he gave an account of his tour of observation and study in Europe. The delighted audience requested him to publish a volume of travels.

On returning to Middletown, Dr. Fisk found a hearty and universal welcome. Despite his absence, Wesleyan University had gone on prospering. The fact that he was absent to add, by the expenditure of $7,000, to the philosophical, physical, and astronomical apparatus, and to the library, made his absence less felt than it would otherwise have been. Professor A. W. Smith had shown himself a skillful and prudent administrator of the internal affairs of the University during the interregnum; but it was due only to the tact and firmness of President Fisk that this skillful and tactful navigator was at the helm. A proposal had been

made to invite the Rev. Nathan Bangs, D. D., to a professorship in Wesleyan University. Somehow Dr. Bangs got the notion that he was to be acting president whenever Dr. Fisk was absent from college, an offer which Dr. Fisk had been extremely careful not to make. Had Dr. Bangs been presiding officer during this period, he would doubtless have shown the same inefficiency he did show when elected president a few years later. When Dr. Fisk was dying, somebody asked him who would be the best man to succeed him. He responded, "Dr. Olin," thus repeating his earlier verdict on Dr. Bangs.

Yet this very success of the youthful college made the erection of new buildings for their accommodation a necessity. But under the terrible financial depression of those days, there was only one way open for obtaining the money needed for these enlargements, — an appeal to the Connecticut legislature. In the fall of 1838, Dr. Fisk printed an appeal for circulation amongst the members of the legislature, setting forth the needs of Wesleyan University, and the strict justice and propriety of state aid. This appeal is a masterly paper, setting forth every argument that could be urged with propriety, anticipating and skillfully exploding every objection that could be raised. It had the rare merit in such papers of not setting up any excessive or unreal claim, but keeping to reasons which appealed to every man's sense of justice. This appeal was so impressive that a grant of

$10,000 was made by the legislature. Dr. Charles Woodward, then a representative of Middletown in the Assembly, a devoted friend of Dr. Fisk, was very useful in helping this bill through the legislature. Dr. Fisk also wrote private and public letters not a few, respecting the general interests of education or the special needs of Wesleyan University, though none of them of such importance as to need further remark here. Busy as he was in all these various ways, he set about the work of preparing his "Travels" for the press. One motive for doing this was the fact that, although President Fisk offered to bear the whole expense of his journey to Europe, the trustees generously and wisely refused his offer. He then offered, if they would build a house for the president, to turn over the proceeds of the sales of his "Travels" towards the house, to remain without interest so long as he occupied the house, but to pay six per cent. interest in any other case. In 1838 the "Travels" went forth to encounter the usual fortunes of such publications. It speedily ran through seven editions, and eight thousand copies were sold. Thus Dr. Fisk had the satisfaction of turning over $2,700 towards the erection of the president's house on the conditions named.

In 1838, Dr. Fisk attended the New England Conference for the last time. It was on many accounts a painful and sad occasion for him; for he was to be brought to trial before that body on charges of slandering the fair name and defaming

the honorable reputation of La Roy Sunderland. The correspondence between Sunderland and Fisk on this painful subject exists in their own handwriting. Also, the defense of Dr. Fisk against these charges, in his own well-known hand, exhibits the skill of a legal expert, the nobleness of a great character, and the humility of a saint. There was only one point where any doubt could arise, — a private conversation between Fisk and Sunderland was reported one way by Fisk, and a very different way by Sunderland. If the conference believed Sunderland, they would condemn Fisk; if they believed Fisk, they must condemn Sunderland. Under ordinary circumstances a conference would have no trouble in deciding between a Sunderland and a Fisk. But the circumstances were not ordinary. Sunderland was an ardent anti-slavery man, — one of the sort who had denounced Fisk as pro-slavery, an advocate of slavery because of his colonization principles. Fisk knew that the conference favored Sunderland's views rather than his own, and that not a few of the men whose votes were to decide the issue had signed the memorial addressed to the British conference which had so embarrassed him at Birmingham. Rev. Dr. Luckey, then editor of the "Christian Advocate" at New York, and another equally reliable witness, made deposition that La Roy Sunderland had willfully and repeatedly lied about the action of the New England Conference respecting Sunderland's case. These witnesses threw Sun-

derland's case so completely out of court that nothing was left for him to do but voluntarily and unqualifiedly to withdraw his charge. It was characteristic of Fisk's magnanimity that, though Sunderland had charged him with having left his character to suffer under defamation and slander while he was taking his ease and pleasure abroad, Dr. Fisk did not wish extreme measures taken against his disarmed antagonist.

On the first of August, 1838, Wilbur Fisk presided for the last time at the Commencement of Wesleyan University. There was some apprehension on the part of many personal friends of President Fisk that this might prove his last appearance on such ceremonial occasions, but this fear was apparently not shared by the president's immediate family. Hence nothing presaging such a change appeared in his remarks on that day, nor in any of the addresses spoken on the commencement stage by the youthful orators or essayists. Yet he was so feeble that many doubted his ability to endure the fatigues of the occasion. He was so anxious to participate in those pleasant scenes, that he laid down on his bed until the moment came for joining the procession. He bore the exertion better than he had expected to. That evening he held his commencement reception, and received the guests in his usual cordial and affectionate way. As sixty candidates for admission were examined, the whole aspect of college affairs was bright and encouraging.

The first token that Dr. Fisk was overdoing came to him in ascending the famous leaning tower at Pisa. His companions carried him down in part. "But possibly it was owing in part to this that my legs were for months afterwards subject to a peculiar numbness and dull sensation of internal pain, which complaint was not a little embarrassing in my subsequent sight-seeing." This trouble recurred in 1838, attended with swelling and stiffness of the knee. Yet he went on with almost all his engagements. He had now come to such facility in the use of his pen that he planned three new books, — one on Mental Philosophy, one on Moral Philosophy, and one on the Philosophy of Theology. Meanwhile his correspondence grew every year wider and wider. He never lost an old correspondent. He readily took up new ones, and even the humblest, who could not spell even, much less tell coherently what they wished, were sure of a careful and detailed answer from him. After his death seven hundred and twenty-five letters were found filed away, all received and answered after his return from Europe. Yet was there no complete file kept.

The approach of winter renewed and intensified the pains in his limbs, so that he consulted a doctor and used some local applications. The old longing for preaching took fresh hold of him, and he gave two or three moving sermons from his chair. He visited New York in the interest of his dear Oregon Mission. He also attended the farewell ser-

vices for several missionaries to Liberia. He was not to speak, but being asked to do so, Dr. Fisk arose, and delivered one of his most splendid and stirring appeals. "For vivacity and power it equaled, if it did not exceed, any former effort. It completely thrilled his audience, and 'drew tears from eyes unused to weep.' He was then so feeble that he had to sustain himself on his cane, to which he affectingly alluded in his remarks." He made appeals to the Methodist Episcopal Church for a celebration of the Centennial of Universal Methodism, and gave needed counsels for doing it in the wisest manner.

At a watch-night service, the last night of the year, Dr. Fisk preached the first sermon, on the text, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of my fathers" (Gen. xlvii. 9). Unable to stand, he spoke from a raised seat. Thus he discoursed of life, death, and immortality. "As he compared man, in the current of life, to a vessel in a whirlpool, borne round and round by the mad current, offering feeble resistance, until it reached the vortex and disappeared," the thought startled many that he was thus describing his own peculiar situation. The next day being New Year's Day, he devoted the whole of it to making calls on friends whom his duties had compelled him to neglect through the year, saying: "I must exert myself to meet the calls of friendship, or I never shall have time to meet them. My duties only seem to increase with my years."

The last time Wilbur Fisk visited an earthly sanctuary it was in the company of the Rev. Jason Lee, of the Oregon Mission, with three little native boys to be educated at the East in the Christian religion. Dr. Fisk was greatly pleased to see them, and they to see the "Father of the Mission." These noble men conversed on this work as only two such men can. There and then Dr. Fisk drew a plan for the employment and location of about thirty additional laborers. The next September they sailed for Oregon. Then he took part in a service at the church held in behalf of this work.

Notwithstanding the swelling of his feet, Dr. Fisk went on with his work. He preached his last sermon the 13th of January, 1839. The next day he spent in sketching plans for a new boarding hall. On pleasant days he took walks or drives in the open air. His last excursion of this sort was to visit a graduate of the University who was seriously ill a couple of miles away. On the 31st of January he for the first time kept his room, yet he kept the business of the college in his feeble hands until a fortnight before his death. As late as February 5th, he sent off thirty letters written in the interest of the college.

As all his bad symptoms had grown steadily worse, — constant pain in the limbs, the unabating swelling of his feet, his expectoration less, but his breathing growing steadily more obstructed and difficult, — a council of physicians was called to

examine his condition. Their report was that no improvement could occur, and that the end was not far off. This report was a great surprise to him. His physical condition during the last fortnight was like this: —

"A constant struggle for breath, almost to suffocation, and a most excruciating pain in his chest and bowels. Though it was cold, he could bear but little fire, — at times none at all. The doors were kept open all the time, and sometimes the windows; and yet he required some one to fan him almost constantly, to increase the circulation of air around him to assist his respiration. Those around him had to wear cloaks and shawls."

Lying down usually had the effect of greatly increasing the difficulty of his breathing, so that he commonly spent twenty-three hours of each day in his chair, and only one on his bed.

As to his spiritual condition he answered all inquirers substantially as follows: "Death has no terrors; but I have not that open vision of heaven I could desire. Pray for me, that the prospect may brighten. I have a fixed peace." Yet this settled peace was once for a brief time disturbed. To the Rev. Horace Bartlett he said: "The enemy is thrusting at me sore. If you have any faith, pray." The prayer of faith broke and terminated the evil spells of unbelief.

As to the ground of his confidence, it was the sacrifice and intercession of the Saviour. He would not tolerate any reference to his Christian useful-

ness in the church and world, as a ground of special gladness or hope in his dying hours: —

"Oh how little have I done! Oh the many deficiencies! I feel constrained to ask forgiveness of the church and the world. I shall be a star of small magnitude, but it is a wonder that I shall get to heaven at all. It is because love works miracles that such a sinful, feeble worm may be saved by grace. Oh the mercy of God, to put such comeliness on such a worm as I! I am an unprofitable servant. How little have I done of what I might have done! . . .

"I have thrown myself on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus."

As to the great Christian doctrines he said, "They are the truth of God, and will bear the light of eternity."

Many things contributed to render his parting with his family a painful and anxious one. The advanced age of his mother-in-law, the youth of their adopted daughter, and the peculiar unfitness of Mrs. Fisk to encounter the trials of widowhood, must have made his thoughts about them gloomy and comfortless as he looked to their situation on its earthly and human side. As he had always expected to outlive his wife and her mother, he had not been careful to provide means for their support after his departure. He knew that all they had, supplemented by the aid which would be rendered his widow from the funds of the New England Conference, would be but a meagre sustenance. Not six months earlier, after the session of the New England Conference, says Mrs. Fisk: —

"I felt alarmed for his weakness, and expressed my fears that his exertions at conference would lay the foundation of a disease which would prove fatal. He replied: 'I hope not. After I have rested, I shall be better. I have been called to make great exertions, in behalf of the church, against a spirit which I cannot think is the spirit of the gospel. I have done it conscientiously, and from a sense of duty.' And, raising his eyes full upon my face, with an expression I had never seen on his face before, he added: 'Dear wife, if my exertions could only be the means of uniting the church, I am willing my life should be the sacrifice. And is it asking too much of you?' I burst into tears, saying, 'I cannot feel as you do.'"

This touching scene must serve as a background and relief to the leave-taking from his family. Witnessing the intensity of Mrs. Fisk's sorrow on hearing the adverse result of the physicians' council, he said: —

"My dear wife, I have always loved you; I have loved to love you; and you were never dearer to me than at this moment. But do not distress my dying moments with your grief. This ought not so to be. I have a great work to do: you must help me by your prayers. I have always thought I should outlive you, and have always prayed that this lot might never be yours; that it might be reserved for me, for I know how unable you are to bear it. But God seems to be determining otherwise. Bear it? You cannot bear it! But God will help you; for he has promised to be the widow's God and husband, and he will not fail."

Mrs. Fisk dropped on her knees before him (he

was in his chair), when her husband laid his hands upon her head, and poured out his soul to God for her in prayer. Then, beckoning Mrs. Fisk's mother, and the daughter, Martha, to him, he gave the whole family, as they knelt around him, his dying blessing, concluding with the words: "I leave you in the hands of a good God. He will take care of you." From that hour God strengthened the heart of the chief mourner for the duties and trials which lay before her.

At another time the sick man comforted his wife in these terms: —

"Your husband cannot be buried! he will be in heaven. His body may be; and let it go, and mingle with its mother earth: why should you lament? And yet I love this body, notwithstanding it has so often been a hindrance to the aspirations of my mind; for it has been an old companion of mine. It has cost me much care and pain, its tendency being continually to decay; and though it may lie long in the grave, it shall be raised, and I shall see it again; for I hope to be united with it, but with none of its infirmities, with none of its moral deformities. Yes, every particle of this dust shall be raised and changed, in the twinkling of an eye, on the morning of the resurrection. Then it will be freed from all its infirmities. It will have no lame limbs, no weak lungs. It will be refined from all its gross particles. It will be buoyant and ethereal, glorious and immortal! It will be perfect, for it will be fashioned like unto Christ's most glorious body, and united with the soul forever."

Referring to his fond parents, Dr. Fisk said: —

"My dear, aged parents, how will they bear the stroke! God will strengthen them for all his will. Write to them, as soon as you can, all the particulars of my sickness. Give them my best love. Wherein I have failed in duty, I believe they will put it down to poor human nature. Give my best love to all of them. Tell them I believe I shall meet them *all* in heaven."

Hearing Mrs. Fisk say that his life had been sacrificed through his excesses in labor, Dr. Fisk said: "Sacrifice — sacrifice — what did you say?" Being reminded that this was the opinion of the physicians, he proceeded: —

"Yes; they say my nervous system is prostrated, and that, to be sure, looks like sacrifice. But it is too late now. . . . I do not know but my friends will think I have done wrong in exerting myself so much, and I do not know but I have; but I have not intended it. It is much more pleasant for me *now* to look back and feel that I have exerted myself to the utmost degree of my strength — for you know I could do but little at best — than it would be to look back on a life of idleness. We were not placed here to be idle; nor shall we be idle in heaven. I feel, indeed, as if I should hardly want to go there if I thought I should be idle. If the Lord take me away, he has something for me to do; for he never gave me such energy of soul as I have, without designing to employ it."

There were two things which he now arranged for the benefit of his family. Being told that the church and world would expect to see a biog-

raphy, he reluctantly consented to the suggestion, so far as to name Professor Holdich as his choice for that work.

At a later day he said to Mrs. Fisk: —

"Write to Dr. Bangs, and say that it is my request that my writings which have been published may be collected into one form, and published for your benefit. Tell Dr. Bangs to say to the brethren I believe they would wish to see you provided for, and if there should be more than you need, let it go to the University: I think it will do more good to the church generally. If I had thousands to leave, I should think I was benefiting the general church most by leaving it to the University; for, I trust, streams will issue thence which will greatly assist in fertilizing our whole moral vineyard. Education must go hand in hand with religion, or the world will never be converted without a direct miracle from God. Our people will take care of our other institutions, but I fear they are not sufficiently awake to the subject of education. Oh, if I could only feel that our people — our brethren in the ministry — were alive to the interests of the University, how it would cheer my departure! But I leave it in the hands of a good God, who has blessed it beyond our most sanguine expectations, and I trust will continue to bless it for the good of the church and for his own glory."

This message shows that the University had the next position to his own family in the affections of Wilbur Fisk; hence we may as well complete here what he had to say on that point. It is noticeable that he sent no message to the New England Conference on the kindred subjects of education and

the University, probably for the reason that he had already so trained that conference to liberal ideas and action on that matter, that it was already leading the church. But when he last saw Dr. Bangs he intrusted him with a message to tell the New York Conference: "That I give it as my dying request that they nurse Wesleyan University, — that they must exert themselves to sustain it and carry it forward." The selection of Dr. Bangs as bearer of this solemn message shows the usual sagacity of President Fisk, since Dr. Bangs could induce that conference to heed this dying request, if anybody could.

When people spoke to Dr. Fisk about the loss the college would sustain by his death, he replied: "I think it is of God, and if so, he will no doubt take care of it. If it is not, certainly I have been connected with it long enough. It has always been my aim, and, so far as I know the feelings of the faculty, it has been the aim of us all, to send forth young men into the world to make it better." Again: "It will be easy to find another president, but not so easy to find another father."

Of the faculty circle he once said: "We all loved each other, and lived together in such harmony." Mrs. Holdich responded: "Yes, doctor, but you were the magnet that drew us all together. We all loved you." "Yes, but not because I was worthy," was the modest reply.

As his illness was during the long vacation, not all the members of the faculty were accessible.

But to those who were in town the invitation went to come together to the sick-room of their friend and president. To them he expressed his fears that the church in general was not keenly enough alive to the cause of Christian education, and went on: "On you, therefore, will devolve a double duty. Oh, be faithful! Hitherto you have been faithful." Then to Professor Smith, who had always been acting-president during his various absences from the college, he said: "I thank you for the interest you have manifested in relieving my burden. You and Professor Huber have been associated with me the longest; you have, therefore, shared with me the deepest in the cares, the interest, and the poverty of the University. But you will not lose your reward. I would express my love and gratitude to you all for your kindness to me. It gives me great pleasure to recollect how pleasantly we have lived together, not only in college, but in our little family circle. We have shared each other's joys and sorrows." Then for the beloved wife so soon to become a desolate widow he asked, with incomparable grace, a tender place in their homes and hearts, saying: "I believe she has added years to my life by her constant care and nursing. You will love her for my sake." Mrs. Professor Smith answered for all that so it always had been, and so it always should be; a vow which was sacredly redeemed. With his habitual courtesy the dying man said, that what he had said of the professors applied to those absent as well as to those present.

[illegible] town, to the number
[illegible] bid their honored
[illegible] good by. At his de-
[illegible] a body. As soon as
[illegible] beckoned to them to
[illegible] his wan and wasted
[illegible] parting words. It was
[illegible] his counsels varied in
[illegible] of their character
[illegible] their minds was

[illegible] any message for
[illegible] his answer was:
[illegible] Yet you may
[illegible] And though we
[illegible] I die at
[illegible] and I
[illegible] we shall
[illegible]
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account of our esteemed brother, and that they be authorized, in the event of his death, to prepare and adopt, on behalf of this Board, such resolutions of condolence as the melancholy occasion may require, and take such other measures as circumstances may call for."

Three of the committee — the Rev. Dr. Bangs, the Rev. John Lindsey, and G. P. Disosway, Esq. — visited Dr. Fisk on this mournful errand. When they told him why they had come, he said: "I feel very grateful, though unworthy of such attention. It is, however, only an additional evidence of the Christian sympathy and brotherly affection I have so long beheld among my brethren."

A letter reached him from some of the saintly members of the British Conference. When it had been read to him he said: "Dear, dear brethren! it is so like them! I shall meet them in heaven."

With his keen delight in music, it was a sweet pleasure to have some of the songs of Zion sung by some of his visitors. One of his favorite hymns is number 822 of the revised Methodist hymn-book. This was often sung in his room during his illness, and his face glowed with holy joy as he whispered the words: —

> "Happy if with my latest breath
> I may but gasp his name,
> Preach him to all, and cry in death,
> Behold, behold the Lamb!"

Watts's hymn, another favorite, was sung at his desire: —

"Lord, in thy temple we appear"

He whispered out, slow and distinct, the last two stanzas:—

"Jesus, the vision of thy face
Hath overpowering charms;
Sorrow shall I feel Death's cold embrace
If I be in thy arms.

"And while you hear my heartstrings break,
How sweet the moments roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul."

His catholicity of temper was very naturally called out when clergymen not belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church called on Dr. Fisk. Thus, when the Rev. Messrs. Granger and Tyler, pastors of the Middletown Congregational churches, visited him, "he immediately began to converse about the solemn responsibilities of the ministry, and said, 'I hope you will give the trumpet a more certain sound than I have ever done.'" Afterwards he spoke of the happiness of the union of all real Christians, of whatever name, remarking, "Oh, the near prospect of heaven seems to swallow up all those little distinctions which separate evangelical Christians." To the pastor of the Baptist Church, the Rev. Mr. Cookson, he said: "I am leaving the walls, but I leave you on them. God bless you and make you more faithful in sounding the gospel trumpet than I have been. Oh the responsibilities of a minister! May not the blood of souls be found on our skirts!"

In one of his awful paroxysms of distress, when all present thought the breath had left the body forever, the Rev. Dr. Jarvis, of the Episcopal Church, chanced to be present, and pronounced over the departing saint these words: —

"Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit thee. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace both now and evermore."

On reviving, the weary man said, "I thought I should never breathe again."

To the various visitors whom he received in his sick-room, whether they came merely to show their respect or on errands of mercy, he always had just the right thing to say, so that these words were long treasured up with gratitude. One of his visitors managed to say to him what all felt. To Judge Hubbard, whom he had known in business relations, he said, "You find me hovering between two worlds." "And fit for either," was the felicitous response.

He could not bear to think of the trouble and distress of his family during his long illness. His wife says: —

"He became somewhat easier, and occasionally had brief naps. Such had been his distress that I had passed several days and nights without sleep. He had repeatedly urged me to lie down until I said to him, 'My dear, don't make the request. Let me be with you while I can. Every moment, every word, is precious.' Then

he ceased; yet every look told his anxious feelings. Mrs. Waring came to watch that evening. Seeing his anxiety, she urged me to lie down, saying, 'It will do your husband good to see you resting, and he continues easier.' My dear husband looked up; he spoke not, but his eyes pleaded her petition. I placed myself on a bed near him, so that I could see him. He remained easier, and sleep soon overtook me. As soon as I woke I went to him and he said, 'Why did you not sleep longer?' When the lady went, he asked her to 'come again, you relieve Mrs. Fisk so much.'"

He expressed his gratitude to all who had any care of him in terms which showed how deeply he felt their sympathy and love. When all efforts on one occasion did not give him the ease he hoped for, he said, as if apologizing for a personal fault: —

"We will try and make it do. I hope you will not think me impatient because I want moving so often. . . . I hope I am not impatient: I groan and sigh a great deal, and I have, perhaps, been in the habit of it all my life; but I hope it is not impatience, and I think it is not. It is only one of Nature's methods of expressing her agony, and I do not know but she finds relief that way."

Again, after intense pain: —

"All this and not death! I thought I was almost home; but if the Lord bid me suffer, I would say, 'Thy will be done.' It is sweet to sink into the will of God, and feel that all is well."

When one tried to ease him by holding him in an easier posture, he said: —

"It will not afford relief enough to compensate you for your fatigue. I am sure I do not know what I am spared for, unless to furnish an opportunity of showing the patience of my friends. Sure never man had such friends!"

His sufferings had now become so intense that it took four persons to attend to his wants. He could find no relief from his complaint except by lying down, and then for no more than an hour at a time, when he would begin to strangle. He was seated the rest of the day in his chair. One was incessantly busy fanning him; another gave him his food and medicines; and two were busy shifting him to positions which might promise momentary relief, or changing this pillow or that blanket in the vain hope that the sufferer would find things a little less unendurable. His very flesh seemed all alive with anguish, and his weariness became intolerable, unutterable. After vainly trying to keep his bed a few moments, he said: "I can find no rest, — tried the bed, but my body is sore all over. I cannot lie down. What must a man do when he can neither lie nor sit? O weary, weary me! When shall I find rest, — rest in the grave?" After another bootless quest for an easier position on his couch for a body which ached in every muscle, quivered in every nerve, and was tired in every fibre, he said: "I have always thought I should have a lingering illness, but an easy death. I would like to have my bed my dying pillow; but my Saviour died on the cross."

Yet even in such distress he was as unselfish as ever. After one of his terrible spasms of distress, when he knew from his symptoms that another was not far off, as he noticed one of the attendant physicians, Dr. Woodward, leaving the room, he exclaimed, "The doctor will not leave me now. I feel that the paroxysm will be very severe." But when told that he had been sent for by another patient, a lady who was very sick, he said, "Oh, then, let him go." Then he asked Mrs. Fisk to pray with him for her relief, and closed his eyes for a time in silent prayer. Anything finer than this I know not where to find in history, though something of the same nature I do observe in the famous act of Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen, where he received a wound in his left leg. . . . "Being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for drink, which was presently brought him; but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, he saw a poor soldier carried along, who had eaten his last at the same feast, ghastly casting his eyes at the bottle, which Sir Philip perceiving took it from his head before he drank, and delivered to the poor man with the words, '*Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.*'" Assuredly Wilbur Fisk was a true kinsman to the noblest of English heroes and noblemen.

The last few days were less distressing, because he had fallen into a lethargic torpor, from which it was not easy to arouse him, but when aroused he was rational and intelligent. His last words

were spoken when Mrs. Fisk aroused him by pressing his hand, and asking him if he knew her. He returned the pressure, saying, "Yes, love, yes." It was the 22d of February, 1839, that Dr. Fisk died.

CHAPTER XIV.

FINAL LESSONS.

It is fifty years since the death of Wilbur Fisk, so that this is a natural point for asking ourselves how far he was successful. A saintly life always is successful in the eyes of God. In human eyes this is not always so apparent, though a saint like Madame Guyon, John Fletcher, St. Francis of Assisi, or Mrs. Judson, makes a strong impression even on worldly men. In the case of men like Faber and Newman, there is always a suspicion that their fame for saintliness has been heightened, if not created, by solitude and congenial companionship. They impress the world with their holiness in an indirect and a roundabout way. But a saint who is a pastor, a presiding elder, the principal of a large school for young people, president of a college, has a fond and very exacting wife, is delegate to general conference, interested in the temperance and slavery questions, who must organize boards of trustees for educational institutions, and faculties of instruction, be school commissioner and visitor, be twice chosen bishop, have much controversy on theological questions and also on questions of ecclesiastical and national policy, has the immense

advantage of acting with all the force of his sanctity on men who are in the thick of this world's business. A man who is a saint in all this and through all this is the sort of saint the world needs. Whatever Wilbur Fisk had to do in any of the relations of life was better and more faithfully done because of his holiness; for he thought the whole conscience, the whole judgment, the whole will, ought to go into every act of duty. Hence the many-sidedness as well as manly vigor of his activity. Hence too the religious fruitfulness of Dr. Fisk's life. If one considers the brevity of his ministerial life (for he joined conference in 1818 and died in 1839, and was for some years too ill to preach) it was a fruitful life. We have seen that at Craftsbury, Charlestown, Wilbraham, and Middletown, however successful in other ways, he would have and did have souls as seals to his ministry; for nothing else would content him. He was often asked to assist other pastors in revival labors, and more than one church owed its existence to his missionary zeal.

How far successful Dr. Fisk was in educational work has been already set forth with such detail that it will not be needful here to do more than allude to it. It was shown that there had been an extremely creditable change in New England Methodist education since Dr. Fisk's day. From the fact that nothing was said of such work in other parts of the country, it should not be supposed that there was nothing to be said. Schools

on the model of the one at Wilbraham have been multiplied in every part of the country, so that nothing but want of room has led to the omission of details about them. Were all the Methodist colleges that have been established elsewhere in our land to do the same kind of work that Wesleyan University has done, grouped together at Middletown, the array in point of numbers would dwarf Oxford University itself. And of this vast educational movement Dr. Fisk was the providential leader, because he first brought into play the common sense, the hard work, the saintly character, and the religious inspiration needful for such a difficult work.

The two reforms for which Dr. Fisk labored so assiduously and unsparingly, temperance and anti-slavery, have had curiously contrasted fortunes. He thought the victory of the temperance cause at the very gates, on account of the ease with which Christians of every section of the country and of all churches could be combined against it. Yet the saloon still baffles its enemies, and secures a reversal of all legislation that seeks its extinction. But slavery, which seemed so impregnable to him behind its constitutional defenses, has been swept out of existence, simply because it was mad enough to renounce the constitutional protection which was its only safeguard against the civilization and humanity of the age. Yet with what heightened courage and faith in God would he not renew the war against rum in view of the unhoped for and magnificent victory over slavery!

So with the missionary work in which Dr. Fisk took such an early and intelligent interest. It is not merely the immense advance that has been made in the sums given for missions; in the better literary, classical, and scientific education given modern missionaries; in the wiser methods of missionary activity that would seem hopeful to Dr. Fisk, but the profounder way in which the church has grasped the true principles of missionary zeal and activity. A good man triumphs in the triumph of the causes to which he is devoted.

The most recent of Edwards' biographers has shown us how he was drawn on to undertake the defense of all the extravagances of Calvinism both at the bar of reason and of Scripture. So powerful was that defense that it compelled a readjustment of the views of all the advocates of Calvinism in the English Protestant world. This movement of readjustment was equally obvious amongst the adversaries of Calvinism; for they were compelled to reëxamine the philosophical basis of his views, as well as to submit to searching scrutiny the exegetical principles to which he had resorted. This work of readjustment has been largely left to the American Wesleyans, because Edwards is much more of a vital force here than abroad. Amongst the other American critics of Edwards' Inquiry, the book of Bledsoe, "Examination of Edwards on the Will," deserves careful study, as being the only formal reply by an Arminian.

The real answer, though not a formal one, to the doctrines of Edwards and his school, was to come from a pupil and associate of Dr. Fisk's at Wesleyan University, — Daniel Denison Whedon. Young Whedon had enjoyed long and fruitful intercourse with President Fisk. Of him he says, "I learned more theology from Dr. Fisk than any other man." He was Fisk's trusted friend throughout his "Calvinistic Controversy," and it was probably at his suggestion that Whedon began a careful study of Edwards' Inquiry, for he says: —

"Even so late as my pupilage, the scholar was expected to understand his soul from Locke, his conscience from Paley, and his responsibility from Edwards. Of this triad, if the indicated materialism of the first, the low expediency of the second, and the granitic fatalism of the third, did not prepare me for the atheism of Hume, it was because my moral sensibilities disbelieved and repudiated the whole quaternion. I could neither believe, from the first, that I had no soul; from the second, that I had no conscience; from the third, that I had no will; nor from the fourth, that I had no God." [1]

This systematic and thorough study of Edwards' Inquiry had one unexpected result: —

"As he followed Edwards' steps, he felt compelled to assent to Edwards' arguments, until he at length found himself led into the terrible grasp of an iron fatalism. From this his soul revolted, but his reason saw no way of escape. It caused him the greatest distress. It haunted him by day, and awoke him from

[1] Whedon's *Essays, Reviews, and Discourses*, p. 38.

sleep by night. He called on God for relief, and besought him for light; he would rise from his bed to pray; and finally, when on his knees in prayer, he saw the clue. With that clue he turned anew to his reading the first chapters of Edwards, and soon detected his fallacies and mistakes. That clue was the fact of *human responsibility.* It is the basis of his argument against the necessarian theory. Thus the treatise on the Will was begotten in prayer. It was at the suggestion of Dr. Fisk that he began to write."

It is a curious fact that Jonathan Edwards was for years in a state of mind towards those dogmas closely resembling that of his illustrious critic. "From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me." It is curious to mark the sharply constructed outcome of such scruples in the minds of these two greatest of American metaphysicians. Edwards says: —

"I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men according to his sovereign pleasure; but never could give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's spirit in it, but only that I now saw fur-

ther, and my mind saw the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it, and it put an end to those cavils and questionings. . . . God's absolute sovereignty and his justice with respect to salvation is what my mind seemed to rest assured of, as much as of anything that I see with my eyes; at least it was so at times. But I have often since had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly bright, pleasant, and sweet. But my first conviction was not so."

If ever a great thinker went through with grievous, sorrowful, and contradictory frames of mind towards his own inherited dogmas, it was Jonathan Edwards. The first attitude, "from my childhood up," was one of strong repulsion and disgust; then came a second attitude of strong approval of them, but never was he able to assign and explain any reasons for this transition from strongly hostile to strongly favorable feelings: it happened and Edwards recorded it; "at least it was so at times" is incidentally thrown in. The final transition in his mind is "from conviction to delightful conviction" of their truth.

Edwards' account has the frankness and candor of a great and powerful thinker. His statements are not without certain elements of contradiction. In one sentence he "could never give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced;" and in the next he thought, "I now saw further,

and my mind saw the justice and reasonableness of it." Then the idea comes to him that this changed attitude, whose logical reasons he does not see and cannot explain, may proceed from "an uncommon influence of God's spirit." It was in this illogical and confusing way that Edwards' mind found rest from "those cavils and questionings" which had followed him from his youth.

The younger metaphysician, brought up in traditional unbelief of Edwards' principles, but led both by the advice of Dr. Fisk and the natural attraction of a strong book for a strong thinker to study Edwards, exposes his mind to the full force of Edwards' argument. At first, the reasoning overwhelms his mind; he becomes temporarily an Edwardean in philosophy and theology. But his moral distress is so intense as to fill his soul with anguish. In prayer to God for direction, the clue to the errors of Edwards is given him in the fact of human responsibility. A quarter of a century later, this pupil and successor of Wilbur Fisk in the championship of Arminian theology gave the best exposition and defense of those views the world has yet seen in "The Freedom of the Will as a Basis of Human Responsibility, and a Divine Government Elucidated and Maintained in its Issue with the Necessarian Theories of Hobbes, Edwards, the Princeton Essayists, and other Leading Advocates."

This book was instantly recognized by all good judges, whether friends or foes to its doctrines, as

the broadest, most scholarly, and most philosophic defense of the Arminian system that has ever been published. It has long been one of the books every young Methodist clergyman has to lay to heart as a part of his course of study. It has made an equally decided impression upon hostile critics and students, as appeared from the violence of their attacks as well as the carefulness with which they study it. Regular courses of lectures on it are given in several Calvinistic theological schools, which bestow no such honor on Edwards' Inquiry. Yet no formal answer has appeared.

It is mainly on the strength of this book that the round of questions relating to the freedom of the will may be regarded as having found an adequate settlement.

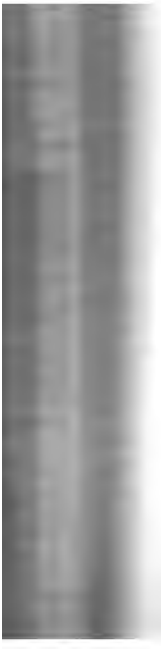
It is not meant by this that the advocates of necessity will disappear from the realm of philosophy or of theology. What is meant is, that whatever can be said on either side has been said. At the present hour, one of the most hopeful religious omens is the frankness with which former Calvinists repudiate their own errors. When that most conservative of churches, the Presbyterian, is widely agitated by vigorous movements in favor of a revision of its Calvinistic formularies, Wesley, Fisk, and Whedon may well congratulate themselves that not only does no such contention divide the peace and energies of their followers, but also that not a few of the noblest and wisest of the

Calvinistic leaders see in the unity and orthodoxy of Methodism one of the happiest omens for the future of the American churches.

Jonathan Edwards is reported to have said that nobody had answered his famous Inquiry. Should he return to earth, he would find that formal answers now abound. Yet perhaps the most unanswerable response to his greatest book is the extent to which his own earlier feelings of repulsion and disgust are shared not only by saints like Wesley, Fisk, and Whedon, but also by an innumerable army in all the Calvinistic bodies. It is barely possible that even Jonathan Edwards might now regard his early disgust at Calvinism as the profound and sacred voice of a conscience that could only be reduced into silence by his greatest efforts. In the present struggle to repudiate Calvinism, he might perhaps see the proper and just reaction of the regenerate conscience and heart of our times against his dogmas.

Certain it is that the repudiation of Calvinism is one of the most characteristic and widespread movements of our time. All must conclude that the wide diffusion of Methodism has had much to do with this changed temper of the times. So far as this movement involves an especial repudiation of Edwardean theology, that result is mainly due to Fisk, Whedon, Bledsoe, and their helpers.

There is no doubt that Dr. Fisk would regard his large influence, direct and indirect, in promoting this change of sentiment, as one of his chief earthly honors.



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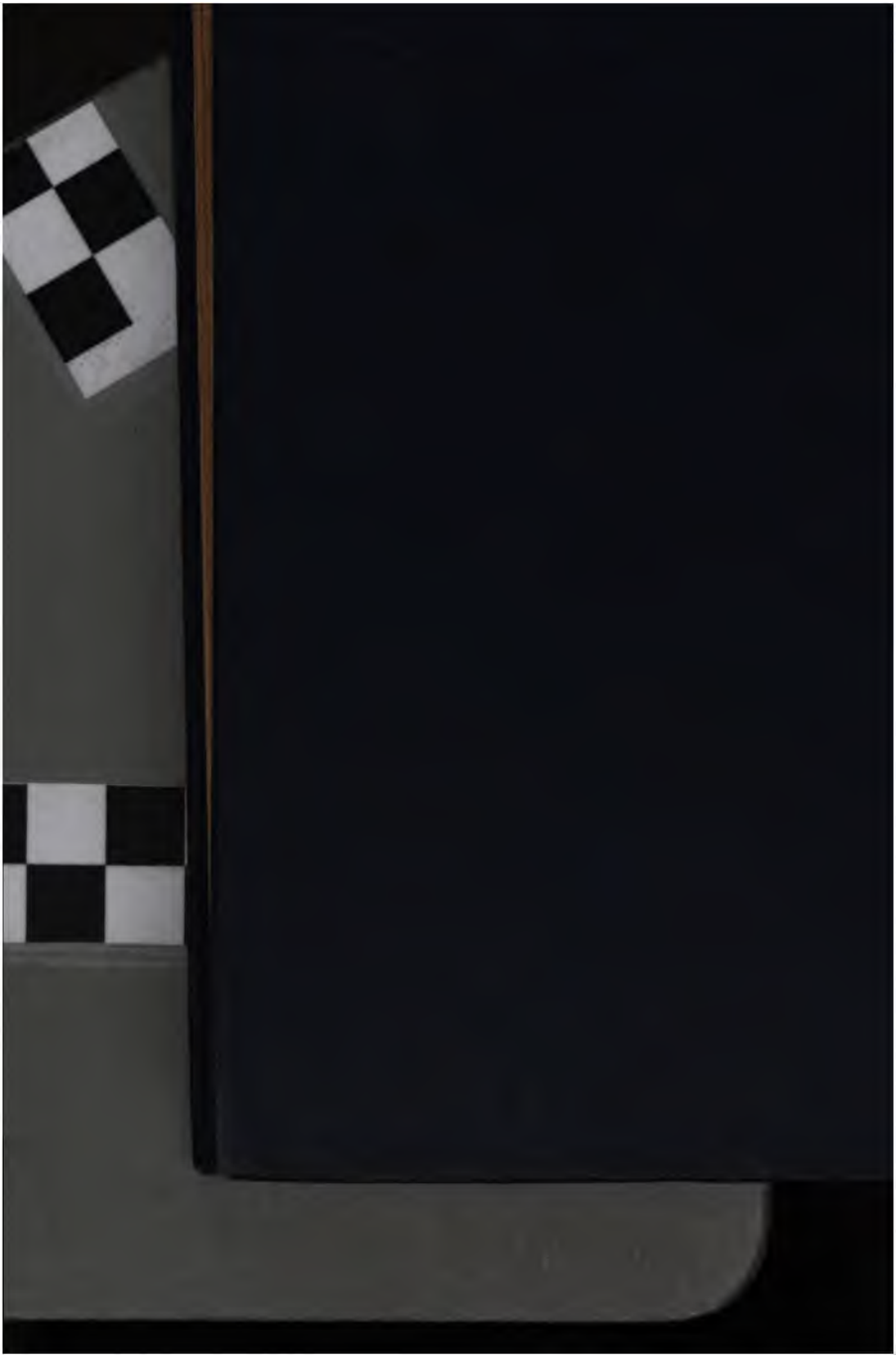
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